

Adventures in burgerland

Section Two cover story

The making of the modern girl

Part 4: Where do we go from here?

Artist or pornographer?

Judgement day for a British film-maker

The lager drinker's paradise holiday

Why students are flocking to Belgium

Farmers urge slaughter of older animals as Europe confirms ban on beef 'Kill our cows and save farming'

DONALD MACINTYRE
PAUL FIELD
AND SARAH HELM

Farmers last night conceded what ministers have so far refused to accept - that only a cull of their herds can restore confidence in British beef. In an unprecedented plea to the Prime Minister, John Major, they urged the removal of at least 15,000 older cattle a week from the food chain at a cost of £700m a year.

The scheme, which has already been presented to ministers, would mean the carcasses of the slaughtered cattle would be incinerated rather than used in meat products.

The National Farmers' Union President, Sir David Naish, said: "The events of the past week show that we have gone beyond the stage of relying solely on science."

In the first indication of a Government U-turn over the crisis, Mr Major promised he would consider the call for selective slaughter "very carefully" but made it clear that if he had to take such measures he would lay the blame squarely on the Opposition for "undermining confidence" in the beef industry.

Mr Major was speaking as it became clear in Brussels that the European Commission will today confirm its ban on British beef sales despite last-minute efforts by senior British diplomats and scientists to reverse the decision. European veterinary experts last night confirmed the ban must go ahead.

But there were also signs that the Commission was prepared to consider cash help for British farmers if the Government escalates its response to the crisis by slaughtering cattle. At the same time, Whitehall sources were not ruling out the prospect that Mr Major will raise the issue of the beef ban, which ministers have described as "outrageous" when he goes to Turin on Friday for the Inter-Governmental Conference on the EU's future.

In angry exchanges in the



Facing crisis: Farmers at an emergency meeting organised by the National Farmers' Union in Askham Bryan, York, yesterday

Photograph: John Angerson

Commons, Mr Major made it clear that ministers would study proposals made in the letter from Sir David, for £2,000 to £5,000 cows being destroyed each week instead of being killed for meat. Sir David called for cattle normally slaughtered

at the end of their working lives as dairy cows or suckling mothers to be banded from entering the human food chain.

The proposal, backed by leading food manufacturing, catering and retailing industry leaders, came as Ministry of

Agriculture officials began exploring their chances of securing EU funds to compensate farmers for losing the profits from sending dairy cows no longer providing milk to be slaughtered for beef.

There were clear signs of ir-

ritation among senior ministers with Douglas Hogg, Minister for Agriculture, for having given credence to the idea of large-scale slaughter by publicly airing the option at the weekend. It was left to Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, to conduct

a media blitz throughout the day - including some rough handling by angry housewives and farmers on a radio phone-in show during which he argued there were better ways of spending huge sums on public health than by compensating

farmers for unnecessarily slaughtered cows. In the Commons, Mr Major reserved his public anger for the Opposition.

Tony Blair, the Labour leader, accused the Government of "mind boggling incompetence" and demanded that Mr

Major quantify the "extremely small" risk of contracting the human disease CJD from BSE-infected meat. Mr Major retorted: "It will be extremely difficult to restore confidence if MPs continue to undermine that confidence for reasons I think will seem unfathomable to people in the agricultural industry and to the wider public."

Sir David's letter to Mr Major and to leaders of the Opposition parties said the NFU supported Government policy of relying on its scientific advisers and insisted that the measures it had so far taken met "all food safety needs".

But then in a passage which looks increasingly likely to secure a partial reversal of Monday's decision not to remove tens of thousands of cattle from the food chain, Sir David wrote: "I have now concluded that despite the reassurance offered (on Monday) by the Secretary of State for Health in relation to the consumption of beef products by children, more must be done to restore consumer confidence both in the domestic market and in Britain's export markets in Europe and the rest of the world."

Sir David also said pointedly that the EU, announcing its planned worldwide ban on the sale of British beef, had made it clear "that it will only reconsider the ban on British exports if further moves have been made to reassure the public on the safety of British beef". The NFU is also calling for a slaughter scheme for young calves as the market for veal meat has virtually disappeared with the EU ban announced yesterday.

The proposal canvassed by Commission experts yesterday was for Britain to agree to the phased slaughter of dairy cows, the animals most prone to the disease. According to one estimate, the Commission might consider compensation of up to £2 billion should Britain agree to the slaughter of 700,000 dairy cows.

Ban 'is the only choice', page 2

The killer protease, page 17

BSE and Europe, page 19

Council blocks report on child victims

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES
Legal Affairs Editor

A council-voted yesterday to suppress an independent report into one of Britain's worst child sex abuse scandals because of fears that it could help seriously damaged victims in their legal claims.

The decision by Clwyd County Council came after an eleven-hour intervention by its insurers Municipal Mutual, who threatened to cancel the authority's cover against a possible £20m in compensation from abused former residents of care homes in the county.

Welsh Labour MPs condemned the move as "Kafkaesque" - while the affair could set worrying precedents for the gagging of future council-initiated inquiries. That is because it appears to establish that a

New child abuse scandal

After extensive inquiries by the police, the council has decided to suppress the report.

How the Independent revealed the scandal in 1991.

council's duty to protect its finances from legal action will always take precedence over its duty to protect children by revealing the mistakes and failings of the past.

The inquiry team, led by former Derbyshire social services director John Gillings, began work two years ago amid widespread concern about sexual and physical abuse in North Wales children's homes. The report into seven Clwyd homes is estimated by Labour MPs to have cost at least £500,000, but

most of the 40 copies in circulation will now be pulped after all but a handful of Clwyd's 64 councillors opted to halt publication.

The investigation covered one of the longest-running and most serious abuse scandals involving children in local authority care. From 2,000 statements and 150 complaints, 58 files were sent to the Crown Prosecution Service, but just seven men were eventually convicted of sex abuse or assault in separate prosecutions brought

during a four-year police investigation covering 46 homes in total.

John Allen, formerly of the Bryn Alyn Home, Wrexham, was jailed for six years for sex offences against boys. Peter Howarth, former deputy head of the council-run Bryn Estyn, near Wrexham, was jailed for 10 years for assaulting seven boys between 1974 and 1984.

According to North Wales sources, among a host of findings the report criticises Clwyd social services' running of its own homes, the infrequency of visits to homes by the Welsh Office's Social Services Inspectorate, and inadequate responses to the authorities to signs that children in care might be being abused.

The interests of the children often took second place to the preservation of professional



positions, the report is understood to say. The interviewing methods of the North Wales Police are also said to have been raised, and the report highlights the need for a judicial inquiry because of the refusal of some

witnesses to speak to the Gillings team.

Clwyd hurriedly called off a press conference to launch the report last Friday after Browne Jacobson, solicitors for the Municipal Mutual, insisted that its contents could help up to 40 abuse victims secure compensation for their suffering. Some former residents were so traumatised by their childhood experiences in the homes that they later committed suicide.

Municipal Mutual got into financial difficulties in 1991, in a "solvent run-off" situation and is prevented from writing new business. Outstanding business is being handled by Zurich Mutual.

Councillors were also warned that they could be made personally liable for legal payouts, risking bankruptcy. TURN TO PAGE 3

Britain faces two-speed Europe

MARY DEJEVSKY
Laval

France and Germany yesterday laid out plans to create a single currency which would in effect relegate Britain to the slow lane of a two-speed Europe.

After a long period when prospects for monetary union have seemed to be in abeyance, Bonn and Paris plan to give the idea a political boost ahead of Friday's Turin summit. The meeting is being called to rewrite the Maastricht treaty, which first set out the goal of monetary union.

The French and German finance ministers, Jean Arthuis and Theo Waigel, met in the French town of Laval to set out ideas on how monetary union should operate. They said that they were determined to launch a single currency by the 1999 deadline laid down in the EU Maastricht treaty, despite the economic gloom which surrounds the prospects for both nations.

Mr Waigel said that the timetable for monetary union must be stuck to. "We plan to stick to the timetable since everything else could lead to ex-

change rate tensions," he said. Mr Arthuis said France and Germany had agreed on the need for a system governing exchange rate relations between those who join a single European currency in 1999 and those who stay outside. This would recreate the European Monetary System, but with the Euro - the new European currency - at its heart.

The exchange rate mechanism would allow for "intervention by the European central bank, with the Euro as the anchor point," Mr Arthuis said. The idea is to penalise countries

which allow their currencies to slide against the Euro. "We do not want to make way for competitive devaluations," Mr Arthuis said. The plan would mean that Britain could be asked to maintain a parity against the Euro - recreating the disastrous scenario which led to the pound's exit from the exchange rate mechanism in 1992. Mr Arthuis said that the two ministers had also discussed plans to create a new body within the EU that would set economic policy - and from which Britain would be excluded if it chose not to enter

a single currency. "We are talking about a council made up of ministers in the third phase [of European monetary union]," he told reporters. This would counterbalance the future European central bank, which would run monetary policy. The German central bank governor, who also attended the meeting, put his weight behind the Euro even though he has been sceptical of the idea in the past. The Bundesbank president Hans Tietmeyer said he saw no arguments at present that the timetable for monetary union should be delayed.

IN BRIEF

Fighting chance

The Army is considering sending women into the front line as members of tank and infantry units. Page 3

Crime rate falls

The number of recorded crimes fell by 2.4 per cent last year in England and Wales. Page 5

Today's weather

Sunny but cold again with frost tonight. Section Two, page 29



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BSE crisis: Commission decision reached in atmosphere of intense confusion and with little scientific backing

EU set to confirm ban on exports

SARAH HELM
Brussels

The European Commission will today attempt to halt the crisis over British beef by confirming an unprecedented total ban on British beef exports to the EU and the rest of the world. In the face of fierce British protests the Commission argues that it has no choice but to impose the ban in order to maintain confidence in the EU beef market.

However, the Commission decision has been taken in an atmosphere of intense confusion in Brussels, with little clear legal or scientific basis. The Commission has come under intense pressure to take a firm lead, and blame Britain for giving it no warning of the alarm.

and therefore little time to preempt the crisis. While Britain has accused the European Commission of taking unjustified action by imposing a ban, the Commission argues that the ban is the minimum necessary to contain the problem.

At one point during the discussions it is understood that Franz Fischler, the Agriculture Commissioner, canvassed the idea of banning the marketing of British beef throughout the EU, including Britain. A marketing ban would have been far more serious than an export ban, leading to the immediate removal of all beef products of European shelves.

The Commission has an obligation under the EU treaties to protect the health

and safety of all consumers, and questions have been raised about whether Brussels should not take action to protect British consumers too. However, this proposal was swiftly set aside in view of the political

storm it would cause. The sense of confusion in Brussels intensified yesterday when even the export ban, first announced by Mr Fischler on Monday evening, following advice from the EU's veterinary committee,

was apparently put on hold. Commission sources said the ban was blocked at the last minute after Neil Kinnock and Leon Brittan, the two British commissioners, refused to endorse it. However, other officials

denied this, saying Jacques Santer, the Commission President, had delayed a decision following a telephone call from John Major urging the Commission to look again at the evidence. A second meeting of EU veterinary experts yesterday endorsed Monday's ruling to impose an export ban.

The last-minute doubts, however, about whether to go ahead with the ban will only further undermine public confidence in the handling of the crisis.

Questions were also being asked in Brussels yesterday about the wide scope of the ban, agreed by the EU veterinary committee. Some senior EU vets suggested the all-inclusive nature of the ban was political and not taken for scientific reasons.

The decision was taken to draw the ban as broadly as possible by blocking export of all beef, beef products and beef-related products.

However, in the hurry to produce a proposal no clear list was drawn up, leading to fears that a big range of British food and pharmaceutical products could be barred from export. Senior EU vets said yesterday that there was no need to ban certain beef-related products, such as gelatine, and these should be clearly eliminated from the ban.

There was also deep uncertainty yesterday about whether the Commission has the power to impose a ban on British beef exports to the non EU countries.

IN BRIEF

'Stalker' guilty of assault

A stalker convicted of assaulting a young woman was warned by a judge that he faced a "lengthy custodial sentence". The conviction of Italian Gaetano Constanza, 31, from Luton, for assault was a landmark in moving to make stalking a crime because he had never touched his victim.

He was found guilty after a jury at Luton Crown Court heard he had "destroyed" the life of computer operator Louise Wilson, 23, for two years with an obsessive campaign of more than 800 letters, phone calls and paint-splashing. He had denied the single charge of assault causing actual bodily harm between 1993 and last year.

Top trout lake shuts
Britain's top trout fishing lake was closed yesterday after hundreds of fish were found to have died. Blagdon Lake, near Bristol, was stocked with 30,000 brown and rainbow trout for the start of the trout fishing season. Tests were being carried out last night.

Life for scissors killer
A man was jailed for life for hacking to death his stepdaughter and a young boy with scissors to cover-up a sex attack. Tariq Rehman, of Bradford, attacked Rachel Rooney, 15, and Jonathan Copley, with such force, the scissors snapped in two, Leeds Crown Court was told.

Hours earlier, he had tried to molest Rachel, his stepdaughter. Rehman, 35, a district manager with Britannic Assurance, slaughtered the children to stop them telling about the sex attack, it was alleged. A jury of seven women and five men took less than three hours to find him guilty of their murders.

Schoolgirl alert
Police were "very concerned" last night for the safety of a Manchester girl who left home after being bullied at school. An alert has gone out to all ports after Sally McGrath, 13, said in a letter that she wanted to go to France.

Morgue mix-up
Hospital chiefs have apologised after the wrong body was released from a morgue for a funeral. Undertakers arranging the burial of pensioner John Callaghan, 77, went to collect his body but discovered it had been released to another family three weeks ago and cremated. Cardiff's University Hospital, Wales's biggest hospital, has launched an inquiry into how Mr Callaghan was confused with another man with a similar surname.

Extradition bid
Extradition proceedings have started to bring home one of Britain's most wanted men from a Dutch jail. Andrew Shacklady, 26 - described by police as "unstable and dangerous" - is sought to face charges involving attempted murder, drugs dealing and the death of a woman in a high-speed car race. A warning was broadcast about him on BBC TV's Crime-watch.

Truck and roll
A mobile studio which belonged to the Rolling Stones will be sold for up to £20,000 at an auction of rock memorabilia in London next month. Bob Marley and Deep Purple also recorded hits in the custom-built DAF truck.

Amie goes home
Dublanc massacre victim Amie Adam, aged five, who suffered a shattered thigh, left hospital last night with her parents. Two other children injured in the shooting - Amy Hutchison and Mark Mullin - remain in hospital in Slirling.

20p 'robber' cleared
An Old Bailey court case over a 20p robbery which has cost an estimated £130,000 ended in an acquittal. The jury took just 45 minutes to clear 19-year-old Michael Salmon from Manor Park, east London of robbing a student. A blackmail charge had been dropped.

Birds Eye stops making burgers

WILL BENNETT and
ROBERT CRANE

Production of beefburgers was halted by the frozen-food company Birds Eye yesterday as the effects of the collapse in consumer confidence caused by the BSE scare reverberated through the food industry.

Airlines and some hospitals and restaurant chains also joined the move away from British beef, but most supermarket chains said they would continue to stock it and it will remain on the menu at Buckingham Palace.

The decision by Birds Eye to suspend beefburger production at its plant in Lowestoft, Suffolk, which employs 1,000 people, was another blow for farmers. But the company said it would not lead to redundancies.

A company statement said: "Whilst we remain confident about the quality and safety of our beef products, we have decided that in the light of continued consumer concerns we are reviewing the use of British beef and are considering options such as alternative sourcing and product reformulations." Virgin Atlantic, Richard Branson's airline, yesterday banned British beef from its flights. A spokeswoman said: "We have decided to remove all beef products from our flights leaving the UK. This is due to the level of public concern."

The decision follows bans by British Airways and British Midland. A BA spokesman said: "This is in acknowledgement of our passengers' concerns. Following detailed examination of current facts we have re-adjusted our menus. We still offer beef where beef is an option, such as Argentinian beef or Scottish beef which has been farmed organically."

A spokesman for Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital Trust in London said: "We have taken beef off the paediatric menu but on the adult menu it is not sourced from within the UK... None of our patients wanted to eat British beef." But at the John Radcliffe Hospital Trust in Oxfordshire, a spokesman said: "We have not taken it off the menu because we have had no directives from the Department of Health and because at the end of the day it is up to patient choice."

A spokeswoman for the Beebeater restaurant chain said that it was continuing to serve British beef but "where it is on the menu we inform the customers so that they can make an informed decision".

Tesco, Sainsbury, Marks & Spencer all said that they would continue to sell British beef, stressing that they bought only the best-quality meat and that products would be clearly labelled.



On the up: Willie McLean, of Auchterarder, Stirlingshire, with his Aberdeen Angus cattle fed entirely on a vegetarian diet and now in great demand Photograph: Ian Waidie

Industry losses reach £50m in first week

PAUL FIELD

The British beef industry lost at least £50m in the first week of the latest BSE scare despite attempts by ministers to restore confidence in the meat trade.

The entire export industry, worth £600m a year, was wiped out, at the cost in four days of around £1m to businesses and hundreds of jobs dependent on the trade. It will not recover unless the Government is successful in lifting the European blanket ban on British beef.

The losses do not take into account the millions lost owing to the knock-on effect of the crisis.

Meat processing firms, freight companies, lorry drivers, auctioneers, animal feed manufacturers and caterers have all been severely hit.

Last night beef farmers in Ulster were bracing themselves for financial ruin after they failed to get their product sold worldwide under a local label to differentiate from British beef. Over 20,000 jobs in the province depend on the beef industry.

Farming leaders and the Meat Livestock Commission are reluctant to put a figure on the costs of the BSE scare but it is understood that the domestic industry has lost half its

business since the Government admitted a possible link between 10 cases of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease and infected beef - a loss of £40m.

A spokesman for the Meat Livestock Commission, Ray Barrowdale, said much beef would have to be destroyed. "Wholesalers are not buying beef. Their fridges are full of meat and they will only shift it by discounting. Prices of beef in the supermarkets will probably fall by a half. If not the beef will have to be destroyed."

At cattle markets across Britain business slumped by 95 per cent. Pens normally

cramped full of heifers and steers were empty. Only sheep and pigs kept the markets open.

As the beef scare broke out last week, prices fell on Thursday and Friday by 20p to 30p per kilo live weight, amounting to between £100 and £150 per animal. This week the prices have remained at that level.

Yesterday, at Shrewsbury cattle market, more than £500,000 worth of business was lost when none of the usual 850 cattle was brought to auction. The picture was mirrored at other auctions across the country.

John Martin, secretary of the Livestock Auctioneers As-

sociation, said: "The crisis has crippled the industry."

He added that auctioneers, who take a 2 to 3 per cent commission on each sale, cannot see a way out of the crisis. Even though the price of pigs and sheep has risen sharply, beef has been their money-maker.

Exporters have been forced to lay off staff as they watched their business dry up.

Anglo Beef Processors, one of the largest beef exporters and meat processors in Britain, had £250,000 worth of beef turned away from the Continent in four days. The company said it had lost £1m in export business

during the first week of the crisis which forced it to make 52 staff redundant, lay off 140 and send 100 on leave.

As the crisis deepened it has emerged that depressed farmers are already being admitted to hospital because of distress caused by the BSE scare.

Dr Peter Higson, of the Clywdian Community Care NHS Trust, north Wales, reported that potentially suicidal cases had been treated. "Our trained volunteers are busy with calls. Farming can be a lonely business and there were already intense economic pressures before this latest crisis."

Time to stand up for Britain

DAVID
AARONOVITCH

It was planned that way, of course. Mr Major's job - blaming Labour for the beef crisis - was going to be difficult enough as it was without such a tangible reminder of the days when ministers used to express opinions before consulting scientific committees. Wrong opinions, as it turns out.

With his front bench Gummer-free, the PM set about the business with a will. The thrust of his case, as it revealed itself, was as follows: last week we were having a perfectly manageable little health scare - past problem, not many dead, all better now - when along came Tony Blair and Harriet

Harman and irresponsibly frightened the living daylight out of consumers. So if horrid things happen and cattle get slaughtered as a result of all this hysteria, it will be their fault.

But there was a paradox. While the PM's voice rose with anger and frustration, calling forth the full range of Majorite gesticulation (from pointing leftwards to pointing rightwards) the Labour leader probed furiously and quietly. Rarely has the case for calm been urged with such lack of restraint. Nor the argument for panic pressed with such cool deliberation.

The best indication that the Major had lost the plot came when Blair asked the question that every consumer wants the answer to - how big is the risk now? - prompting the response that Labour's attitude would be "unfathomable to people in the agricultural industry and those outside it". Blair - not just fearfully but translucently - carelessly enunciated that the Government was guilty of

"mind-boggling incompetence". Toe-knee sat down. "I would have thought you had done enough damage in the last few days," retorted Mr Major.

But was Labour alone to blame? Paul Marland (C, West Gloucestershire and farmer) added another name. Wasn't it time, he boomed, "for the media to stand up for Britain? For a start they could go to the continent and 'examine what in Europe is known as staggers'. Is it really? 'Donner und Blitzen, Marlene, es ist die Staggers.' I don't think so, somehow."

Peter Viggers (C, Gosport) spread his net even wider. Labour, the media, and... McDonalds, "all of whom have something to sell: newspapers, beefburgers and themselves". Whereas government - poor, maligned, selfless government - had "other responsibilities". The Prime Minister agreed. All these people were indeed guilty of "ill-thought-out comments, that should never have been made". Which would have been a bit hard to say with Jon Selwyn sitting next to him.

Slump takes toll on jobs

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

The "mad cow" crisis yesterday began to take its toll on jobs as slaughterhouses stopped killing cattle and at least one plant closed.

Two of the country's largest companies laid workers off, sent others on holiday and announced redundancies. Leaders of the meat processing industry warned that in common with farmers they might also be seeking compensation.

Forfar Meat Traders, based at Dundee, became the first corporate victim, closing with the loss of 12 jobs. Mark Batchelor, director of the company blamed a "needless panic" on ministers. He said: "We have found it more and more difficult to continue trading with every BSE scare over the last few years. This scare has been the final nail in the coffin."

One of the leading companies, Anglo Beef Processors, axed 52 jobs, laid off 140 workers and sent more than 100 on leave for a week. ABP warned that could be more lay-offs to come.

Another leading company, Midland Meat Packers, of Crick, Northamptonshire, sent 150 employees on holiday for two weeks at the country's largest abattoir. Midland, part of the Baker Group, said it would re-evaluate the situation after Easter.

Midland said it had no immediate plans for redundancies and would "go to all lengths" to prevent job losses. The company had "an excellent reputation for quality" and complied with all British and European laws. Alistair MacDonnell of Irish-owned Anglo Beef Processors said the outlook for jobs in the short term was "fairly awful". He said: "We keep hoping that some sort of sanity will return. If it continues it is not just the farmers who will be seeking compensation but the processing industry."

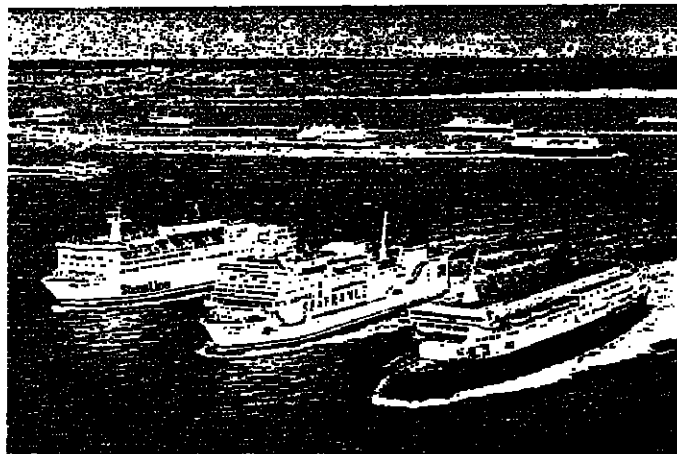
The largest union in the industry, the Transport & General Workers, said it was being inundated with members concerned over their jobs and their health. The T&G said that the jobs of its 50,000 members in the industry were under threat.

A spokesman for the National Farmers' Union said some of their members were desperate to know how they were going to survive if the crisis continued. Some 70,000 holdings kept beef cattle and some meat came from dairy herds which were farmed in 42,000 locations.

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Army poised to put women in front line

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

The Army is considering sending women into the front line, with its tank and infantry units — the only regiments from which they are still largely excluded, it was disclosed yesterday.

MPs have said they want a full parliamentary debate before a final decision. Women already serve on Navy warships and as jet pilots in the Royal Air

Force, but a decision on their wider employment in the Army could also lead to their being allowed to serve in the Royal Marines' commando units.

Women currently make up 7 per cent of the British armed forces and the Ministry of Defence is reviewing the jobs they are allowed to do with the aim of widening employment opportunities.

A report on manning and recruitment by the all-party Com-

mons Defence Committee, published yesterday, welcomed the review, which is due to report in the summer. But it recommended that "the complex legal and social issues" should be debated before any decision is finally taken to deploy women in the armoured regiments and infantry "in contact battle".

The wider employment of women would help the Army meet its extensive commitments at a time when it is short of

2,500 infantrymen. At present, 47 per cent of the posts in the Army are open to women. Women already serve in other fighting arms, including the Royal Artillery, Royal Engineers, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and the Royal Logistic Corps.

They also serve on board all the Navy's surface warships, which are ready to go to war at any time. The only obstacle to women serving on submarines

is the lack of privacy, but the provision of suitable facilities will be considered as part of the design of the next generation of submarines in about three years' time.

Women can now serve as aircrew in all three services. The RAF has 12 qualified female pilots; the Army three women flying Lynx and Gazelle helicopters.

The main obstacle to employing women in front-line

tank and infantry roles has been perceptions of their physical strength. The Army has commissioned a study by the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency (DERA) in order to develop a series of tests designed to determine whether individual women would be able to carry heavy loads over long distances — one of the essential elements of front-line combat. The first trials with the new tests on 214 men and 106

women were completed on 15 December last year.

A new high-level military command will take charge of the planning and execution of military operations involving all three services from next week, the Secretary of State for Defence Secretary, Michael Portillo, announced yesterday.

Later this year it will also take command of the new Joint Rapid Deployment Force, which will include the 3rd Com-

mando Brigade, based on the Royal Marines and the 5th Airborne Brigade, supported by the SAS, the Special Boat Service, an armoured battle group and sea and air forces.

It was also announced that the SAS will move from its present base in Hereford to a nearby site. The old base at Surling Lines is too small and 22 SAS Regiment is to move to the former RAF station at Credenhill in the next three years.

Orange accuses Cellnet of misleading ads

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

The telecommunications company Orange has complained to the Advertising Standards Authority over alleged "misleading" advertisements by Cellnet.

The advertisements, which have been placed in national newspapers in the approach to Orange's stock-market debut today, promote Cellnet as being cheaper than its fledgling rival.

One of the advertisements boasts that Cellnet is "The net that sets you free" while labelling Orange "The net that sets you back". Another states: "To save Orange a bit of money we have published our prices next to theirs."

Orange believes that Cellnet is not comparing like with like and in some cases sets the cost of offpeak use on the Cellnet system against a mixture of offpeak and peak usage on Orange. The company also feels that the advertisements ignore the overall value of its tariff packages, some of which include extras such as 12 months free insurance.

Orange declined to comment on the attack by the larger operator and would not confirm the complaint to the ASA. However, industry sources said that the company is aggrieved at the "selective" nature of the advertisements and the timing of their appearance. There is also a view that the plethora of different pricing arrangements from all the mobile operators makes it impossible to make fair comparisons. Orange has always argued that it does not sell on price alone and never will.

Both Cellnet and Vodafone regard the fledgling Orange as a serious player in spite of their

own dominance. Vodafone's total subscriber base is approaching 2.5bn with Cellnet not far behind. At the end of February, Orange had 440,000 customers and has been taking on about 30,000 per month.

A casting session for a new advertising campaign by telephone company Mercury has been called off after promotional leaflets said only white children could take part.

The leaflets, put up in swimming pools around south London, specified that babies auditioning for the part of Claire in the Oliver and Claire adverts should be "cute, white and love the water".

Baby Claire is currently featured in a series of cartoon-style newspaper ads and Mercury is planning a TV campaign later this year.

A Mercury Communications spokesman said today: "We were very unhappy with the wording of the leaflets and the way that the casting was handled. [The leaflets] were drawn up by someone a few steps along the line from our advertising agency and did not follow our brief. Their reasoning was explained in the leaflet, but obviously we were very unhappy when we heard about it, immediately ordered the leaflets to be taken down and cancelled last Thursday's casting session at Crystal Palace sports centre."

"We never intended to cause any offence or discrimination. I think whoever drew up the leaflet was acting in good faith but was rather thoughtless."

"The issue of whether to have a casting session is under review."

Orange squeezes Vodafone, page 21

Photograph auction: Fruits of businessman's unusual hobby will net thousands



Mata Hari: The notorious First World War spy captured in a state of undress

Candid collection of the famous for sale

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Arts Correspondent

A remarkable collection of autographed photographs of many of the world's most famous men and women — including Freud, Matisse, Oscar Wilde and Wallis Simpson — are to come up for sale next month.

On offer is an almost naked Mata Hari, the notorious First World War spy executed by the French, wearing little more than an elaborate head-dress and ankle chains, a quizzical-looking Sigmund Freud brandishing a cigar, and a hunched-backed Charles Dickens staring out of the window.

The rare picture of the writer of such classics as *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby* is a signed *carte de visite* valued at \$2,000 to \$3,000 to in the auction at Christie's East in New York on 17 April.

Even more valuable is a large cabinet photograph of Annie Oakley, the pint-sized marksman who could split a playing



The Red Baron: The noble German fighter ace

card held on edge at thirty paces, which is valued at up to \$3,500.

But perhaps the best is the portrait of Henri Matisse, the painter and leader of the iconoclastic *Fauves*, taken sitting respectably on a horse wearing a bowler hat (\$3,000 to \$4,000). The photographs — more

than 300 in all — were collected by a Boston investment property broker, M Wesley Marans.

The businessman began collecting the pictures 28 years ago after being shown an autographed photograph of the gangster Al Capone, which belonged to a psychiatrist friend. "The richness of the image, together with the intriguing signature, 'spoke' to me," he explains.

He continued buying images for three decades, gathering photographs of celebrities throughout the world following the 1839 invention of photography. Mr Marans has been forced to sell by the value of his collection, which he removed from his home ten years ago.

"I have come to the conclusion that just as I have passionately enjoyed collecting and the quest, so should others have this pleasure, rather than locking the pictures in a bank vault," he writes in the foreword to the catalogue.



Charles Dickens: The writer poses for a *carte de visite*

'Mellow' Snagge of BBC radio dies, 91

REBECCA FOWLER

John Snagge, the unmistakable voice of the university boat race, has died aged 91.

Mr Snagge, who provided commentary for the Oxford and Cambridge race on the Thames for more than 50 years from its first broadcast, died in hospital in Slough, Berkshire, on Monday night, his nephew said last night.

His mellow voice also carried generations of British listeners through decades of change and momentous historical events, besides what he called his "lunatic race" broadcasts.

He gave a frenzied non-stop commentary at Buckingham Palace after the coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, broke the news of the D-Day landings and the Hiroshima atom bomb in the Second World War and announced the birth of Princess Margaret in 1930.

He sprang to fame under the BBC's wartime policy of announcing broadcasters' names for the first time to identify them so they would not be confused with German propagandists.

But it was for his commentary on the annual race between Oxford and Cambridge that Mr Snagge will be best remembered. As the dark blues and the light blues sped down the Thames, his unmistakable voice would record their every move.

His most famous gaffe was in 1949 when he said: "Oxford are ahead, no Cambridge are ahead. I don't know who's ahead but it's either Oxford or Cambridge."

In 1944 he was awarded the OBE, and in 1953 he made broadcasting history when he covered the Queen's coronation from inside Westminster Abbey, providing seven hours of continuous commentary.

Michael Green, acting managing director of BBC Network Radio, said last night: "He was one of the great names of radio."

Mr Snagge, was married twice and lived at Dorney, Buckinghamshire.



John Snagge: Voice of the boat race for 50 years

Man's death went unnoticed for hours

REBECCA FOWLER

As commuters returned from work to Blackheath train station in south-east London last Thursday night, they had no reason to look twice at the man sitting on the bench. Only when they returned the next morning and he was still there, still upright, did it become clear that he was dead.

He died at about the time the last train pulled in, and he remained unnoticed for more than eight hours.

He had arrived at the station at about 10pm, half an hour after railway staff left for the evening, and alighting passengers assumed he was either taking a rest or waiting there for a reason.

But when one commuter from the previous evening re-

turned to catch the 6.21am to Charing Cross on Friday, and saw the 52-year-old widower still upright on the bench, he became concerned. An ambulance was called immediately and the man, named as Ron New, of Erit, Kent, was confirmed dead.

It turns out that he had spent the evening drinking with a friend, and had been arrested for drunk and disorderly behaviour. After being seen by a police doctor he was declared fit to go home, and found himself on the station bench.

His niece, Jacqueline Fraser, 34, said last night: "It is very sad that he should have to die like that. It's a disgrace no one saw him at the station. He was so cold and rigid when he was found. It's a terrible way to go with commuters just walking past."

Report on child abuse is blocked by council

FROM PAGE ONE

disqualification from office and loss of their homes. They were likewise warned that any publicity that could create the climate for more claims risked being construed as helping alleged victims. The gag the council has decided to impose on its own members is such that they are prevented from even revealing the report's recommendations for a judicial inquiry.

The leading QC Michael Beloff advised the council last week that it could risk losing its insurance cover if it released a report in which negligence was admitted. He also advised that a council was under no legal duty to inform the public of anything and that the fiduciary duty [duty of trust] of a local au-

thority towards its electors and taxpayers was first and foremost to look after its financial interests.

Yet Westminster Council felt able the day before yesterday to sanction publication of a report criticising it for housing homeless families in asbestos-ridden tower blocks. The May 1991 report into "pin down" where children were kept in solitary confinement was commissioned and published by Staffordshire County Council whose insurers later paid out £1.7m in compensation shared between about 140 victims.

Ron Davies, the shadow Welsh secretary, has written to William Hague, Secretary of State for Wales, urging him to place his copy of the report in

the House of Commons library for MPs to consult. Members could then raise its contents on the floor of the House under the protection of parliamentary privilege.

Rhodri Morgan, Labour MP for Cardiff West, said yesterday: "It is just not credible in the late 20th century that we are going to be shredding this report. It is positively Kafkaesque. If it involves a change in local government law or executive action by the Welsh Office then Mr Hague must take that action."

But the Welsh Office's response was that the affair served to confirm that it had been "right" to set up a "paper" investigation by child care expert Nicola Davies QC, who took no evidence.

Cadbury sponsors 'Coronation Street'

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Media Correspondent

Cadbury, the confectionery and drinks group, has struck a £10m sponsorship deal with *Coronation Street*, Granada's flagship show, which enables the Cadbury name to appear with the opening and closing credits. It also includes off-air promotion using the show's stars.

The on-air sponsorship will start in September, to coincide with the introduction of a fourth episode of *Coronation Street*. The deal concludes months of negotiation by Cadbury for the right to be associated with the 35-year-old soap.

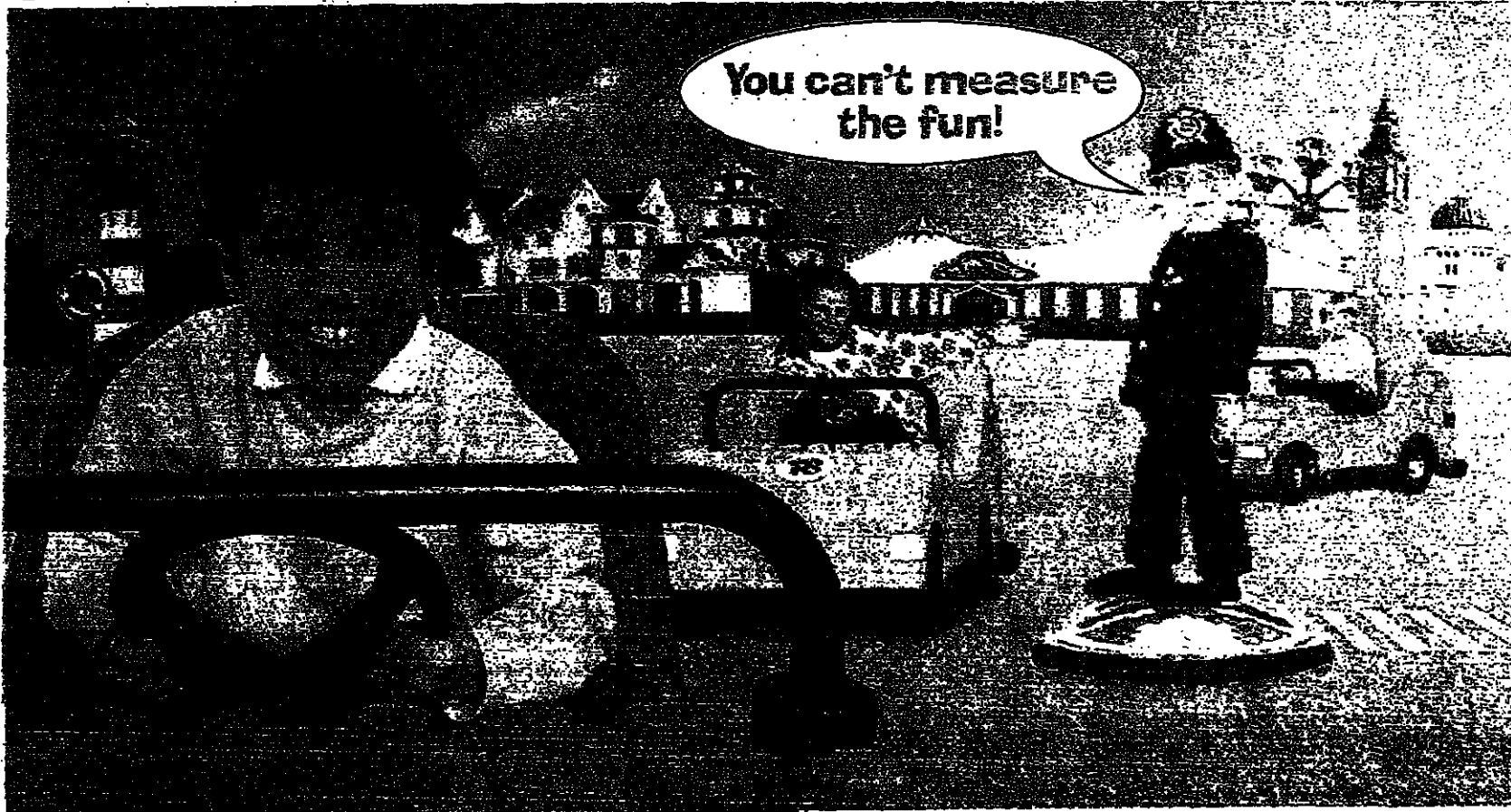
Last August Granada had appeared to come close to a deal with Pedigree Petfoods. It has also been talking to drinks firm Allied Domecq.

"We see the association as very much bringing together two of the nation's favourites," Cadbury's marketing director, Alan Palmer, said.

Yesterday Cadbury declined to specify what the extra duties of the cast would be, although discussions with Granada are expected to centre on photo-opportunities and advertising promotions for competitions.

Yesterday actor Bill Roach, who plays Ken Barlow, posed with Barbara Knox, who plays Rita, beside a huge bar of white Cadbury's chocolate in the shape of the *Coronation Street* sign.

Andrea Wornfor, Granada's joint managing director, said viewers would not be seeing gratuitous close-ups of Cadbury products in Rita's Kabin. Granada's new boss, page 20



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Crime figures fall but trend shows new rise

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

The number of recorded crimes fell by 2.4 per cent last year in England and Wales, but the trend in the last six months of 1995 shows a rise in offences, it was revealed yesterday.

There was also a disturbing upsurge in the number of violent crimes, including street muggings, which rose overall by 5,400 cases in 1995. The largest increases were in Merseyside (up 12 per cent) and in Cambridgeshire (up 10 per cent).

Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, described yesterday's figures – down by 126,000 on 1994 to 5.1 million in 1995 – as a "milestone". However, if reported crimes continue to increase as they have done in the last half of 1995 it could produce disastrous crime figures just before a general election.

Home Office figures show a fall in most types of crime and represent the third consecutive fall in the annual figures – which has only happened twice

before this century. Domestic burglaries were down by 5 per cent to 647,000, though other types of break-ins rose by 19,200.

Vehicle crime fell by 52,900 offences – a fall of 4 per cent – to more than 1.3 million.

But violent crimes, which make up 6 per cent of all offences, continued to go up. The Home Office, however, argued that the rise was the smallest in 12 years. A total of 316,300 violent crimes were recorded in 1995 – a 2 per cent increase on the year before.

The rise was largely due to muggings and robberies, which went up by 8,600 to 68,400. There was also a big rise in thefts against the person, which can include bag-snatching and pick-pocketing, up 18 per cent to 60,000. The other disturbing rise was in drug trafficking offences, which increased by 15 per cent to 52,200.

Sexual offences fell by 5 per cent to 30,400, although there was no change in the number of rapes against a woman, which

was about 5,000. For the first time male rape has been included and totalled 152 last year. Homicides – murder, manslaughter and infanticide – stayed about the same at 746.

About 25 of the 43 police forces recorded falls in crime. The largest were in Gwent (down 14 per cent), Durham (down 11 per cent) and Dyfed Powys (down 10 per cent). Crimes in London fell by 1 per cent to about 840,000.

About one in four of all offences was cleared up or solved by the police. For violent crimes the police success rate rose to about two-thirds. But about 20 per cent of "clear-ups" were from convicted criminals admitting to further offences from jail.

In spite of the falls in the past three years, there has been an annual average increase of 3.6 per cent in recorded crime over the past 10 years. The current drop in crime also shows signs of bottoming out. In 1995 the number of crimes reported compared with the same period in 1994 showed 8 per cent and 4 per cent falls in the first two quarters of the year, but a 1 per cent rise in the last half.

Michael Howard refused to be drawn on the possibility of crime going back up. He said: "This fall marks another milestone in the fight against crime and is a credit to the hard work and dedication of the police."

He added: "It shows that targeting known criminals and specific crimes can and does make a real difference to crime levels in local communities."

Jack Straw, the shadow Home Secretary, said: "Only last month, the Prime Minister was claiming credit for small reductions in crime. But these figures show that in the last six months of last year recorded crime began to rise again."

Fred Broughton, chairman of the Police Federation, representing rank and file officers, said: "The good news is that overall crime has fallen for the third year in succession. The bad news is that violent crime continues to rise."

Notifiable offences recorded by the police

Offence	1994	1995	% change
Violence against the person	316,300	316,300	0
Sexual offences	30,400	30,400	0
Drugs	52,200	52,200	0
Vehicle crime	1,300,000	1,300,000	0
Domestic burglary	647,000	647,000	0
Other burglary	19,200	19,200	0
Shoplifting	1,300,000	1,300,000	0
Robbery	68,400	68,400	0
Other theft	1,300,000	1,300,000	0
Other theft against the person	60,000	60,000	0
Other theft against property	1,300,000	1,300,000	0
Other theft against person	60,000	60,000	0
Other theft against property	1,300,000	1,300,000	0
Other theft against person	60,000	60,000	0
Other theft against property	1,300,000	1,300,000	0

Clear-up rates by type of offence 1995

Offence	Clear-up rate
Violence against the person	20%
Sexual offences	20%
Drugs	20%
Vehicle crime	20%
Domestic burglary	20%
Other burglary	20%
Shoplifting	20%
Robbery	20%
Other theft	20%
Other theft against the person	20%
Other theft against property	20%
Other theft against person	20%
Other theft against property	20%

Inspectors severely criticise Muslim school

FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

Plans for Britain's first state-funded Muslim school suffered a serious setback last night after a critical report from government inspectors.

The inspectors said that Islamia school in Brent, north London, was failing to teach the national curriculum and was breaching health and safety rules in a number of ways. They also questioned the school's discipline policy, under which pupils are hit on the hand with rulers if they misbehave.

Islamia school is currently run privately, relying on fees and private donations to survive. After being turned down for the voluntary-aided status which many Church of England and Catholic schools enjoy, it is now applying to "opt in" and become grant maintained.

But inspectors from Ofsted, the school inspection body, found that its teaching methods

had serious weaknesses and it was failing to diagnose pupils' special needs properly.

Two reports published yesterday on the school's two sections, a primary department and a girls' high school, were very critical of its methods.

Although they declared that the high school met the minimum requirements of the 1944 Education Act they criticised its discipline policy. It was one of the very few schools which still had corporal punishment, the inspectors said, and it should think again about it. If Islamia was allowed to become a state school it would no longer be allowed to use physical punishment.

However, the girls' school had satisfactory standards of achievement and pupils were well motivated and well behaved, they said.

The primary school was criticised for its teaching methods, which the inspectors said failed to stretch the brightest but

were too hard for the slowest. The school had been unable to implement the national curriculum and staff were not checked against a government list of banned teachers – those who have been struck off for abuse or misconduct – before being employed.

Parents and the community gave the school a great deal of support, however, and the welfare of the pupils was well looked after.

Last night, the general secretary of the association of Muslim schools, Ibrahim Hewitt, said that the reports gave extra weight to Islamia's case for state funding rather than weakening it. The girls' high school had some of the best GCSE results in Brent, he added.

"Obviously, if you are trying to run a school on a tight budget there may well be things which slip through, which otherwise would not or should not happen. This strengthens the case for state funding," he said.



Craftsman: Richard Grasby yesterday at the 'Inscribed in Stone' exhibition, at Cardiff's National Museum of Wales until 16 June. Photograph: Rob Stratton

Rugby ref 'had no control of game'

A rugby player who was paralysed when he broke his neck as a scrum collapsed told the High Court yesterday that the referee exerted no control over the game.

Ben Smoldon, 21, who is now tetraplegic and confined to a wheelchair, is suing the referee, Michael Nolan, and an opposing prop forward, Thomas Whitworth, for £1m damages. He said Mr Nolan failed to control the game and should have read the riot act to both packs in the "grudge match" between Sutton Coldfield and Burton on Trent, on 19 October 1991.

When asked whether the tragic incident was just a "one in a million accident", as he had described to reporters soon afterwards, he replied: "I feel it could have been avoided."

Mr Smoldon, who was playing hooker, said: "There was a degree of charging. I was taken along with it by the other players. I can recall turning round to my pack after the second scrum-mage, before the third scrum-mage when I injured myself, and telling them to calm things down because I was concerned..." But he added: "I don't recall any occasion when [Mr Nolan] spoke to the front row."

This was contradicted, however, by Mr Nolan's counsel Richard Davies QC, who said: "I suggest that there were a proper and adequate number of occasions that Mr Nolan did talk to the front rows and explained to them what it was required of them to do."

Mr Smoldon's version of events in the scrum was backed up by his teammate Hywel Iopling, who played loose head prop. He said his opposite number, Mr Whitworth, had not allowed him to scrum down properly.

Describing the actual incident in which his colleague was injured, he said: "I went to engage with my opposite number and there was no push. The ball was put in, but I didn't have any resistance so I fell to the floor. As I was sitting up I saw Ben fall back on the ground and that is when we realised he had been badly injured."

The hearing continues today.

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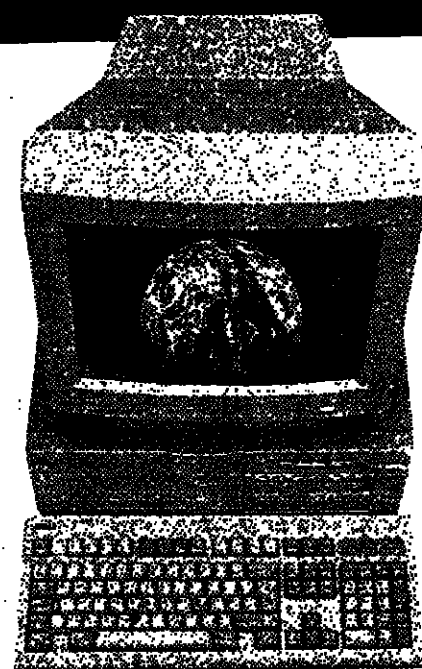
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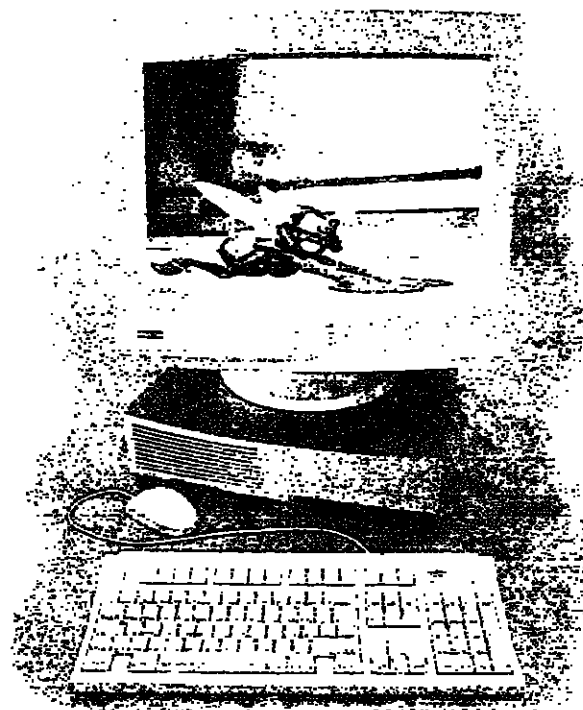
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East End corruption: Auditor attacks Lib Dems for manipulating policy to favour own trading interests in Petticoat Lane area

Councillors ran London markets in 'cavalier' way

JAMES CUSICK

The conduct of councillors and town hall officials responsible for running the world-famous street markets of Petticoat Lane and Brick Lane in London's East End was yesterday criticised as "disturbing" and "cavalier" in a forceful report by the District Auditor.

Kash Pandya described a "catalogue of unacceptable conduct" which led to a disregard for rules and procedures in the London borough of Tower Hamlets.

It was "an object lesson for members on how not to exercise their roles", said Mr Pandya in his 80-page report into the running of the markets.

Over three years Mr Pandya investigated how the then Liberal Democrat-run council had managed to turn a £300,000 surplus on its market business in 1989 into a deficit of £1.5m by March 1994.

Although highly critical of how the borough ran its market business, how it lost income from licensed pitches, and how it did nothing about "illegal" sub-letting of pitches Mr Pandya reserved his strongest criticism for how councillors directly involved in street trading manipulated council policy in their own financial interest.

Considering the lucrative business of sub-letting some of the council's 7,000 pitches, mainly located in the Bethnal Green area - Mr Pandya states this "unlawful" trade exists and can only exist "with the knowledge of some council officers".

The Auditor looked at the

business activities of three named councillors. Councillor Betty Wright, elected as a Liberal Democrat councillor in May 1990, was an unlicensed trader working from a sub-let pitch. After her election she was ordered to stop but continued.

At the time of her election the council was revoking the licence. Mr Pandya's report refers to "documentary evidence" that showed certain councillors applying pressure on council officers not to proceed with revocation which would have pushed Mrs Wright out of business. The report states: "The role played by some members, in particular Councillors Wright, John Snooks and Jeremy Shaw during this period gives me cause for considerable concern."

Although Mrs Wright claims never to have traded from the pitch, Mr Pandya says the roles played by Mr Snooks (the then chairman of the borough's street trading panel) and that of Mr Shaw were "disturbing".

However, Mr Pandya says the evidence falls short of showing "wilful misconduct" and persuaded him not to take the matter to the criminal courts and to seek the recovery of lost revenue on surcharging the councillors.

In an investigation in 1992 by John Hendy QC of the Crown Prosecution Service also concluded there was "insufficient evidence" to proceed.

Mr Pandya investigation into the £1m deficit on the street trading account found that charges which the council listed for such services as refuse collection were irregular and

"outwith the council's statutory powers".

Answering the report's criticisms that Tower Hamlets had operated "totally ineffective budgetary control procedures" a council source yesterday said that while the report had been critical of individuals there had also been criticism of "accounting methods" which put money from street trading into the council's account - helping to reduce the borough's rates.

Yesterday Tower Hamlets accepted that the handling of street markets during 1989-92 was "inadequate". It will discuss the report "as a matter of urgency" in the near future.



Dirty linen: The world-famous Petticoat Lane in east London, where "illegal" and "disturbing" practices have been found

Photograph: Network

DAILY POEM

Raydance

By Olivia Byard

Rays, in the aquarium, dance round
the salty currents, down the water's shimmer
to the music's drift. Twirling, whirling,
tails like tops beneath, their strange wide fins
curl through the foam as they turn,
breathing water in, breathing out.

On the quay at Cadgwith, skate are piled
in pails, white clown faces with mouths agape.
Inhaling the reek of dead fish, I listen,
hastily practise an awkward step.

Olivia Byard was born in south Wales, and currently lives and works in Oxford. Her poetry has appeared in numerous journals, including *Poetry Review*, *Acumen*, and the *Observer*. Her forthcoming collection *From a Benediction* (Peterloo Poets) will be published next year.

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news

Rise in heavy drinking set to defeat targets

General Household Survey: A nation's lifestyle and habits revealed

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

The Government is set to miss its "Health of the Nation" targets for cutting smoking and drinking, the latest figures from the General Household Survey show.

The programme is already in trouble because smoking among children has increased rather than fallen. Obesity appears to be rising rather than dropping, and the latest figures for lung-cancer deaths among women under 75 are also moving in the wrong direction.

The survey of the nation's lifestyle in 1994 published yesterday suggests that the smoking targets for adults are also unlikely to be met — and that excessive alcohol consumption is moving the wrong way for both men and women. In 1994, more in both sexes were drinking above the "sensible" limits of 21 and 14 units a week respectively — and women's alcohol consumption has been on the increase for a decade.

Greater availability of drink in supermarkets and general stores over the past 20 years may help to explain that, Nikki Barnes, the head of the survey, said. "Alcohol is more readily available, but women also have increased independence and wider social lives now that more are working. More women have moved to college and away from home at an earlier age, and grown up in that culture."

Bob Barnes, director of social surveys for the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, added that more women combining work and home may have produced increased stress that had led to more drinking.

Smoking, by contrast, is declining among both men and women, but at an appreciably slower rate than in the Eighties. Smokers are down from 51 per cent of men in 1974 to 28 per cent, and from 41 per cent of women 20 years ago to 26 per cent.

On current progress, the target of fewer than one in five smoking by 2000 looks unlikely.

ly to be met for men, but may be achieved for women.

Men who smoked were much more likely to drink excessively than men who did not — one in three, compared with one in five — and women who smoked were twice as likely to drink too much.

The survey also shows a huge cut in pipe and cigar smoking — just 6 per cent of men smoked cigars in 1994 against 34 per cent in 1974, and pipe smoking declined from 12 to 3 per cent.

Despite the difficulties over some of the 27 targets, most are moving in the right direction, the Department of Health said, with two — a drop in suicides and a reduction in sexually transmitted disease — running ahead of target.

The annual survey shows a continued rise in single parents and more women cohabiting, while a growing proportion of the population lives alone — 15 per cent against 9 per cent in 1973.

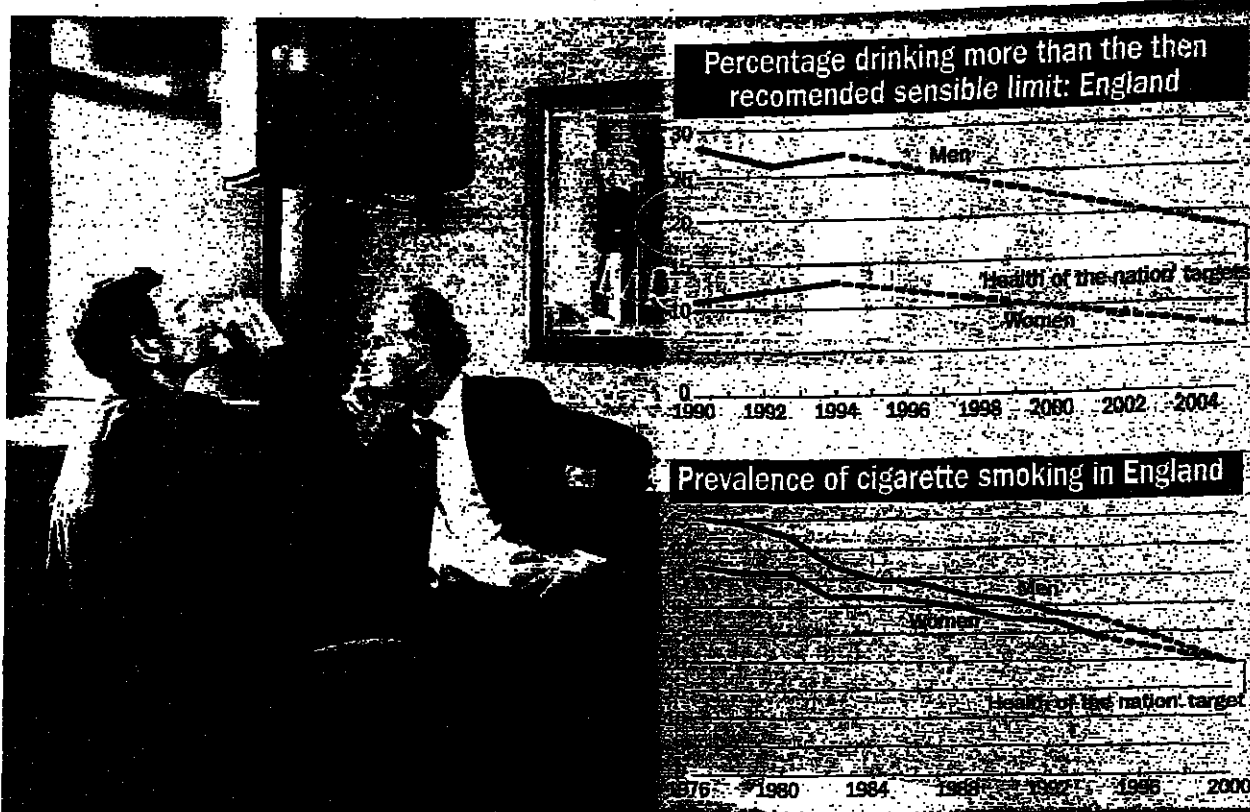
It also shows that the numbers of elderly people who cannot get about alone or manage

basic household tasks are not rising, despite the ageing of the population. Mr Barnes said yesterday that this suggests some of the more alarming predictions about the extra burden from an ageing population may be misplaced.

Since 1980, the proportion saying they find it hard to cope has remained broadly constant — although the figures relate only to those living at home, not to the 7 per cent of those over 65 in nursing and residential homes.

More of those over 65 now live alone than in 1980 (39 per cent compared with 34 per cent) and almost 60 per cent report a long-standing illness or disability which for more than 40 per cent limits their activities. One in ten say that they cannot walk down the road or get up and down stairs alone, with 16 per cent saying they are unable to do their own shopping. The proportions rise sharply with age.

□ *Living in Britain: results from the 1994 General Household Survey.* HMSO: £23.50.



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Cancer from asbestos dust 'is like lottery'

Breathing asbestos dust was like buying lottery tickets and no one could tell which particles caused individual cancers, one of Britain's biggest engineering companies claimed in the Court of Appeal yesterday.

T&N was trying to overturn a High Court judge's landmark decision last October that it must pay damages to two people who as children played in the drifts of white dust which blanketed the roads around their homes.

It was the first time that a court had awarded compensation for asbestos claims made by anyone other than those who had worked in a plant.

William Woodward QC, for T&N, told three judges yesterday that it could never be known when and where a person developed the cancer of the lung lining, mesothelioma.

One of the victims, Arthur Margeson, had played around the factory of JW Roberts in Armley, Leeds, which made insulating mattresses for boilers, for eight years before the dangers were realised and the factory owners became liable to protect people from the risks.

"While he was at school and playing around the area he was also breathing in asbestos dust for which T&N were not liable."

Mr Woodward said Mr Margeson, who had lived in the area since 1925, was exposed during his childhood to "guilty dust"

and "not guilty dust" depending on whether he was within the main danger area and it could not be determined which dust produced mesothelioma.

But Lord Justice Russell said that the line that had to be drawn was where, outside the factory walls, the risk of personal injury became less than a real possibility.

"It is not a very attractive argument for the factory owner to agree that mountains of asbestos dust were created but these cases of cancer were not the result of that," he said.

In what has become a test case for up to 40 other cases in the Armley area and possibly 500 nationally, Evelyn Margeson, 70, was awarded £50,000 by the High Court in Leeds for the death five years ago of her husband, Arthur, who had mesothelioma.

June Hancock, 60, who played in the dust in the late Thirties and early Forties, is also suffering from the same cancer, was awarded £65,000.

Mr Woodward said that in the Leeds judgment, Mr Justice Holland had failed to define where the area of risk lay outside the factory walls.

T&N (known as Turner and Newall until 1987), has already paid £250m worldwide to people directly affected by asbestosis and other related diseases.

The hearing continues today.

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Film awards: Unprecedented achievements by Emma Thompson and Nick Park



Star quality: Nick Park's Wallace and Gromit

Britons make history with Oscar triumphs

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Arts Correspondent

Emma Thompson won an unprecedented double on Monday night when she was awarded an Oscar for her adaptation of Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*. Coming on top of her 1991 Oscar for best actress in another classic British adaptation, *Howard's End*, it made her the first woman to win both a screenplay award and an acting honour.

"Before I came, I went to visit Jane Austen's grave in Winchester cathedral to pay my respects and tell her about the grosses," Thompson joked as she accepted the award in Los Angeles on Monday night.

Also celebrating an extraordinary achievement was Nick Park, the Bristol-based creator of the ingenious inventor Wallace and his long-suffering dog Gromit, who has won awards for every film he has entered. This year he won his third Oscar in a row for his animated film *A Close Shave*.

A third Oscar was won for Britain by Jon Blair for his documentary, *Anne Frank Remembered*.

Emma Thompson, who recently broke up with her husband, the actor/director Kenneth Branagh, had also

been nominated for best actress for her role as Elmer in *Sense and Sensibility*, but that went to Susan Sarandon for the nun in *Dead Man Walking*. British actresses who have won the elusive best actress double include Elizabeth Taylor and Olivia De Havilland.

Nick Park — the first Briton to win three Oscars — confirmed after the ceremony that he was involved in talks with Hollywood executives about making a feature-length animated film. But he says is determined not to recreate Wallace and Gromit for it, even though he has admitted that Gromit resembles himself in "always carrying the baggage of the past and the worry of the future".

He said after the award ceremony: "I'm sitting down to write a feature film that has been pitched to quite a few people here. Wallace and Gromit will be put on the shelf for a while."

Mel Gibson, director and star, took the best film and best director for *Braveheart*, his savage and controversial tale of the 13th-century Scottish patriot William Wallace. The film also won awards for sound effects, editing and cinematography.

Mira Sorvino won best supporting actress for *Mighty Aphrodite* — beating the young



Best screenplay: Emma Thompson accepting the award on Monday Photograph: Reuter

British actress Kate Winslet who had been nominated for her role as Marianne in *Sense and Sensibility* — while Christopher McQuarrie took best screenplay (written directly for a film) for *The Usual Suspects*.

Jon Blair, after accepting his Oscar for the film about the young girl whose diary recorded her two years of hiding in Amsterdam from Nazi troops,

introduced his frail companion on stage as Miep Gies, who helped keep the Frank family alive in their attic hiding place.

"Without her, Anne Frank's story might never have been told. She found her diary on the floor," he said to a wave of applause. Both *Anne Frank Remembered* and *A Close Shave* will be shown by the BBC over Easter.

Nerve damage found in Gulf war veterans

LIZ HUNT
Health Editor

Some veterans suffering from so-called Gulf war syndrome are showing physical evidence of nerve damage, according to new research.

The findings suggest that the nervous systems of individuals who believe they have the syndrome, do demonstrate clear differences when compared with those of the general population.

The findings, to be published in the *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry* later this week, will be seized on by scores of men and women who fought in the Gulf and have since suffered a range of debilitating symptoms. They are campaigning for recognition of Gulf war syndrome by the Ministry of Defence, and many are demanding compensation.

A number of veterans have died after suffering a breakdown in their health that relatives attribute to the syndrome.

Dr Goran Jamal, of the Institute of Neurological Sciences at the Southern General Hospital in Glasgow, analysed the veterans' ability to hear sound impulses, a test designed to determine damage to the central nervous system.

Another test involved monitoring their nerve response to an electrical impulse passed through nerves on their arms and legs to assess injury to the nerve endings in the peripheral nervous system.

The results show there were significant differences between the two populations — the Gulf war veterans versus the control population — in terms of nervous system function. The Gulf war veterans performed less well.

Dr Jamal says on BBC Scotland's *Frontline Scotland* programme, to be screened tonight, Dr Jamal said the "Naps" nerve gas antidote given to British soldiers could be an important factor.

French soldiers not issued with Naps tablets have had

no health problems, he said. Several veterans interviewed in the programme recall how they were given a cocktail of 17 injections against diseases like plague — as well as tablets designed to protect them from biological and nerve gas attack, all in the space of a few days.

"One of the problems is we research these substances alone, in isolation," said Dr Jamal. "What we don't know is the combined effect, of for instance Naps combined with other compounds, and I think it is underestimated."

Katherine Lamb, a former army nurse from Helensburgh, Strathclyde, says on the programme: "I am angry that the MoD have continued to deny there are medical problems. I can't understand why they continue to do this in the light of the evidence available. I think they will have to accept at the end of the day that they have some responsibility for the medical condition of the troops that were in the Gulf."

Benefits ban 'lawful'

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

The controversial decision to withdraw benefits from most asylum seekers was yesterday declared lawful by the High Court, but judges voiced concern over the adverse effects the move may have on genuine refugees.

Lord Justice Beldam and Mr Justice Buxton said they shared the views of the Government's independent social security advisers, who earlier this year had condemned the benefit changes. The Social Security Advisory Committee had agreed that there was a need to deter a growing number of bo-

gus asylum seekers, but said a better way was to ensure more efficient asylum procedures "rather than making changes to the benefits system which would produce such drastic and unwelcome consequences".

The judges' remarks came as the Refugee Council announced that 400 asylum seekers were now homeless and penniless as a result of the benefit changes which came into effect on 5 February. The ruling is expected to affect about 30,000 asylum seekers a year.

But yesterday, in a case which could go all the way to the European Court of Human Rights, the judges rejected claims that

Peter Lilley, Secretary of State for Social Security, had acted irrationally or unlawfully when he introduced the changes.

In the case brought by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants and "Miss B" — who fled Zaire after her husband was murdered and she was raped while held by security forces — the judges ruled the withdrawal of benefits could not be said to be the same as forcing the deportation or expulsion of asylum seekers or withdrawing appeal rights, in contravention of the United Nations Convention on Refugees.

However, they gave the JCWI and Miss B leave to appeal.

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politics

Ministers may support Bill to outlaw stalking

JOHN RENTOUL
Political Correspondent

The Government could back an opposition move to make stalking a crime, after David Maclean, the Home Office minister, invited the Labour MP Janet Anderson to discuss the issue with his civil servants.

Ms Anderson is drafting a private member's Bill to outlaw obsessive pursuit, usually of women by men, which falls short of intentional harassment or threatening behaviour.

She said that she got the impression from her meeting on Monday that the Home Office might back her measure "if I got the wording right".

The Home Office has resisted legislation against stalking, but has recently said that it is being considered. Last week, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, the Lord Chancellor, floated the idea of extending "non-molestation orders", which currently cover married and cohabiting couples, to cover stalking by strangers or work colleagues.

Lord Mackay's plan would be

a civil remedy, although it would give police the power to arrest people who breached orders. But the Government is under pressure to make stalking a criminal offence from some of its own backbenchers, as well as Labour, which wants to see a tougher message to men who can cause years of terror without touching their victims.

Ms Anderson, MP for Rossendale and Darwen, believes she has come up with a solution which will satisfy all sides, by creating a "hybrid" offence of stalking. Her Bill would make stalking a crime, but would also provide for civil orders banning perpetrators from going near their victims.

Tim Lawson-Cruttenden, a solicitor who is advising Ms Anderson, said the problem with making stalking a crime is that the stalker's intentions would have to be proved "beyond reasonable doubt". The test for obtaining a civil order would only be that on the "balance of probabilities" the stalker was reckless as to whether his actions caused distress or fear.

Prosecutions for intentional

harassment failed against Bernard Quinn for stalking the Princess Royal and Klaus Wagner for stalking the Princess of Wales, because of the difficulty of proving intent.

Ms Anderson told the Commons when she introduced her Bill earlier this month: "British women who have been stalked are frustrated by the inadequacy of British law. And while the targets of obsession go on suffering, police are frustrated and angry with the absence of a specific offence of stalking."

She said there were too many cases where women's lives had been "devastated by the actions of obsessive former partners, or sometimes complete strangers".

Under her Bill, stalking would be defined as a "course of behaviour" of molestation, pestering or following likely to harass, alarm or distress.

Ms Anderson said that the Conservative MPs Sir Ivan Lawrence and Lady Olga Maitland and Michael Sheehy have indicated that they would support her Bill.

Her Bill is due to receive its Second Reading on 19 April.



Stepping out: Schools minister Cheryl Gillan at The Royal Ballet School, Hammersmith, London, yesterday, when she announced an expansion of the Music and Ballet Assisted-Places Scheme. Photograph: Geraint Lewis

MP in welfare warning to Blair

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

Tony Blair was urged last night by a leading backbench expert on social security not to adopt means-testing of child benefit and the state pension in Labour's fundamental review of the welfare state.

Chris Smith, Labour's social security spokesman, is looking at means-testing as part of Labour's review to reduce the burden of the welfare state under a Labour government.

As an alternative to means-testing, Frank Field, Labour MP for Birkenhead, urged Labour to expand the role of the mutual aid societies, including building societies.

He called for the party to consider proposals by the mutual aid societies for a three-tier welfare state: a state-guaranteed minimum; the compulsory purchase of a comprehensive policy covering all main social security needs; and voluntary membership of top-up additional insurance coverage.

Mr Smith will publish policy papers on reform of the welfare state in May: on pensions, welfare to work, child benefit, efficiency savings, and a possible statement of principles.

Mr Field, chairman of the Commons select committee on social security, warned the Labour leadership that means-testing would leave the poor in a social security ghetto.

Accepting that the rising cost of the welfare state was not sustainable in the longer run, Mr Field forecast a "major disengagement". "The easiest and most popular way of achieving this outcome would be for a further disengagement from universal benefits, allowing the middle-class to order their own welfare provision and regaining the poor ever more into ghetto-type schemes," Mr Field said in the Allen Lane Foundation memorial lecture.

The Government was defeated last night in the Committee Stage of the Community Care (Direct Payments) Bill on plans to allow disabled people to buy care. About 700,000 people are now potentially eligible for the scheme - 29 times more than envisaged.

Britain's bridges set to fail 40-tonne lorry limit

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

Britain's motorway and trunk road bridges are unlikely to be ready in time to comply with an EU directive requiring them to be strong enough to carry 40 one-tonne trucks, says a report published today.

A study by the National Audit Office, the public spending watchdog, of the Government's £2.2bn motorway and main road bridge repair and upgrading programme, found it is falling behind schedule. Of the 1,241 bridges that need strengthening to meet the EU ruling, only a third have been

dealt with since the programme was launched in 1987.

To hit the deadline, the Highways Agency, the Department of Transport's road management organisation, must strengthen almost twice as many bridges in the next three years. "A marked acceleration is required... if the Highways Agency's aims are to be achieved." But the bridges are also crumbling: the NAO found the number suffering "extensive deterioration" has gone up from 4 per cent since the programme began, to 7 per cent.

An added complication is the Government's squeeze on public spending. So far, some

£700m has been spent and this year's allocation is £120m.

Future spending and the speed of the programme has been thrown into further doubt, though, by the last Budget in which Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, announced a tightening on funding for roads building and maintenance.

"The Highways Agency's latest plans and targets... are being reassessed," noted the NAO.

The watchdog exposed a huge discrepancy in the cost of doing the work. In a survey of 173 bridges they found the costs charged by the agency's contractors ranged from £53 to £130 per square metre.

Major puts faith in attacking tactics

- PM targets Labour front bench
- Scaremonger claim over nuclear power

Faced with the claim Tory-controlled Westminster city council housed homeless families in asbestos-riddled tower blocks, John Major yesterday adopted the line of defence that he and his Government have made a standard tactic - find a Labour target.

Westminster may have put lives at risk in pursuit of its "homes-for-votes policy", as an independent report suggests, but what MPs should be concerned about is rents and empty council homes in Lambeth and Hackney. That was the Prime Minister's Question Time logic.

Mr Major went on to blame Labour for undermining confidence in British beef and the farming industry. And as an unsupervised Tony Blair pointed out, the same had occurred over the Scott report on arms-to-Iraq when Mr Major heaped opprobrium on Robin Cook, the shadow foreign secretary. "Does he not realise this country expects him as Prime Minister to take responsibility?" the Labour leader asked.

A report published on Monday on Hermes and Chantry Points in Paddington, west London, said danger warnings were ignored or played down by the Conservative group's leaders as they attempted to ensure likely Labour voters were housed in Labour wards.

Raising the issue, Robert Wareing, Labour MP for Liverpool West Derby, noted that two weeks ago when he had asked about unemployment, Mr Major had "lambasted" Liverpool city council. "Will the Prime Minister now unequivocally condemn Tory Westminster council for risking the health of its people for political purposes by housing them in asbestos-ridden flats?"

Mr Major said the issue was "very properly" investigated by Westminster who had commissioned an independent report and taken action in the light of it. Almost drowned beneath Labour jeers, he suggested that

since Mr Wareing was sensitive about his own local authority - "appalling as it is" - he should compare two other Labour councils with Westminster.

"He might actually compare the rent arrears in Lambeth, at six times the level at Westminster, and at Hackney, 10 times as great; and 21 times as many unoccupied dwellings in Lambeth and 23 times as many unoccupied dwellings in Hackney."

"Whose housing policies really are the disgrace?" Mr Major demanded to Tory cheers, the deeds of Dame Shirley Porter's old council swept aside.

Inside Parliament
Stephen Goodwin

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US anti-terror forum poised to miss target

PATRICK COCKBURN
Jerusalem

The US will tomorrow convene a meeting of anti-terrorism experts to agree new approaches to the problem in the Middle East. But they are likely to find their different analyses undermine efforts to find agreement.

In Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent*, a diplomat who fancies himself as an expert on counter-terrorism speaks of the "revolutionary party one moment as a perfectly disciplined army, where the word of chiefs was supreme, and at another as if it had been the loosest association of desperate brigands that ever camped in a mountain gorge".

The security specialists from 29 countries, who will gather in Washington in a follow-up to the Sharm el-Sheikh conference assembled by President Clinton two weeks ago, are likely to show similar confusion in their analysis of terrorist groups and measures to counter them.

First, evidence that the CIA supported a bombing campaign by the Iraqi opposition - as revealed in the *Independent* this week - means that the moral

ground is muddy; second, the US leads the camp which sees terrorism as "a perfectly disciplined army", with its general headquarters in Iran. It has pointed its finger at Tehran ever since four suicide bombers from Hamas and Islamic Jihad, the militant Palestinian Islamic movements, killed 62 people in Israel in nine days.

The problem with this thesis is that there is little evidence it is true; Hamas has traditionally drawn its support from Jordan. It is also in the nature of a suicide bombing that it requires little equipment, training or money. Iran may have been involved but the US has yet to produce evidence.

Despite this, the agenda of the Washington conference - it is to be followed by a meeting of foreign ministers on 14 April - will treat terrorism as the fruit of a single organisation.

Few European or Arab countries are happy with this. In so far as they have a picture of terrorists it is closer to the image of "an association of brigands". They see suicide bombs as the effect as much as the cause of a crumbling peace process.

President Clinton said: "The hard-won achievements of the

Palestinian people are under direct assault." But in the Palestinian refugee camps, from where the bombers came, few have seen any of these achievements or benefited from them.

France and Egypt say they want the Washington agenda to be broadened to include obstacles to peace other than terrorism, such as Israel's decision to seal off Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. France also wants the EU to co-chair the next meeting and the one after that to be held in Paris.

Israel was buoyed by the Sharm el-Sheikh summit. More than any other US president before, Mr Clinton backed the Israeli position.

On Iran, the Israeli and US positions are the same. Shimon Peres, the prime minister, said: "Tehran has become the capital of terror." He has also been heartened by a slight recovery in the polls, but he remains vulnerable to another bomb.

Sharm el-Sheikh took place in the immediate aftermath of the Tel Aviv and Jerusalem bombings. Its success will be difficult to repeat. Great powers have been organising meetings to oppose terrorism for over a century with little success. They



Death on the street: The suicide bombing in Jerusalem on 25 February that killed 22 people

Photograph: AP

usually fail because the organisers see bombers and assassins as a minority who can be eliminated rather than the symptom of a broader political crisis.

Conferences like the one in Washington are also traditionally discredited by the large

measure of hypocrisy involved. Iran may support Islamic Jihad, but the US admits to financing Iraqi opposition groups in Kurdistan which have, in turn, exploded bombs in the streets of Baghdad, killing more than 100 people in the past few years.

At heart, most countries recognise the only solution to terrorism is political. When Warren Christopher, the US Secretary of State, was pressing Yasser Arafat, the chairman of the PLO, to root out Hamas, the Palestinian leader is reputed to

have replied: "I will follow the advice you Americans gave Algeria in dealing with their problems." His point was that the US had advised Algerian leaders to talk to their Islamic fundamentalist rebels because they can never be crushed.

Tourists 'were killed for kicks'

ROBERT MILLIKEN
Sydney

Ivan Milat, the road-worker accused of killing two British women and five other young hitch-hikers, killed for "psychological gratification", the jury was told as his trial opened at the Supreme Court in Sydney yesterday.

The description came from Mark Tedeschi QC, for the prosecution. Mr Milat, 51, has pleaded not guilty to seven charges of murdering the British women, Caroline Clarke and Joanne Walters, both 22, two Australian teenagers and three Germans in their early twenties. They all disappeared while hitch-hiking south of Sydney between December 1989 and April 1992.

Mr Tedeschi gave the most concrete description so far of Mr Milat's alleged motives when he outlined the evidence of Paul Onions, a British engineer who is expected to be a star witness. In January 1990, Mr Onions, then 24, began hitch-hiking along the Hume Highway towards Melbourne.

The prosecution alleges that Mr Onions accepted a lift from Ivan Milat, who then tried to rob and murder him. "The post-mortem evidence was that these were killings for killing's sake," Mr Tedeschi said. "The backpackers were killed with more ferocious force than was needed for killing. They were disposed of in a way which ensured their speedy disintegration."

After Mr Onions returned to Britain, reports of the disappearance of the backpackers prompted him to contact the New South Wales police. He went back to Australia in 1994, before Mr Milat's arrest, and showed police the spot where he was picked up and looked at police video images of 13 people.

After Ivan Milat's arrest in May 1994, police searched his house and those of two of his brothers. Mr Tedeschi told the jury that they found a bolt, trigger mechanism, spring and two magazines from a Ruger rifle in a wall cavity at Ivan Milat's house. The bolt, ballistic experts said, was the same one that fired the 10 cartridge cases found near Caroline Clarke's body. The trial continues.

Tower of babble casts shadow over the greetings card game

It is my birthday and so far everyone has been most tactful. No unkind telephone calls from friends asking what it is like to be nearer to 40 than 30. Even the cards have been more or less innocuous with the possible exception of the fat pink hippo from my two-year-old daughter.

Solace also presents itself in a full-page advertisement in the *New York Times* for a book of short essays on maintaining one's personal equilibrium in a stress-filled world, one for each day of the year. It is called *Simple Abundance: A Daybook of Comfort and Joy*.

The entry for my day is displayed as if just for me. "Why

Self-Confidence Can't Be Bought but Can Be Borrowed", reads the top of the page. There are quotes from Betty Davis and Eleanor Roosevelt, and this nugget of advice: "When you're unsure of yourself but life requires you to be otherwise, it is comforting to remember that you can always borrow a self-confident attitude from your authentic self." Pardon?

The shelves and airwaves of America are so crammed with this self-help babble that you might wonder why the entire country is not wildly happy and prosperous rather than hooked on Prozac and analysis. Among the books listed on last week's

NEW YORK DAYS

New York Times best-sellers' list was: *Chicken Soup for the Soul* (stories meant to open the heart and rekindle the spirit - on the list for 77 weeks) and *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (244 weeks).

Now even the greetings card industry is getting in on the mass-therapy act. Among those I received this morning, none were from Paramount Cards from Rhode Island. And for that, I am most profoundly grateful. On the whole, you do not want to be a recipient of a

Paramount card, pretty though they are, especially if it is from its New Paper Rainbow Press imprint.

The Paper Rainbow cards are apparently designed for people who have something delicate to communicate to their partner but somehow cannot find the words - or, more likely, the courage - to say it out loud. Buy enough of these cards and you could virtually hold an entire conversation with your loved one (or not) without opening your mouth. The relationship

would be unlikely to survive until the end, however.

With its water-colour of a pine forest and blue hills, there is this, for instance: "This isn't easy for me to say, but I'm starting to think that things aren't really going anywhere with us, and that maybe we're just not meant for each other". And that's just on the outside. Inside it goes on: "There are certain things we simply don't have that are necessary to make a relationship work, and that's why I think it's best to end things now, before either one of us gets really hurt". Well thank you, darling.

Or for the couple fighting over who should pay the phone bill:

"I think it's safe to say that most couples will argue over money at one point or other. But what troubles me is that with us, it seems to be more than just a minor source of conflict". Inside:

"I'd hate to think that the issue of money could eventually come between us, especially when there are so many aspects of our relationship that are good. I know we've been over this many times before, but maybe it's time we try putting our differences aside and work on a solution we both can live with".

Featured - though in giggling tones - in *New York* magazine's most recent consumer column, the Paper Rainbow series also

includes a "We need more spontaneity" card and a "We need more common interests" card. There is even an in-laws card. "We have a problem that's been building... We both know what I'm talking about..."

I wonder if they have one protesting another year on the ageometer. Addressed to God: "You up there. We have a problem. You know it and I know it. You have to stop with this receding-hair-line, bulging-stomach, crashing-bank-account business. Quit it, or it will be all over between us".

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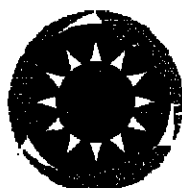
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international

Paris and Bonn relaunch single currency plan

MARY DEJEVSKY
Laval

France and Germany yesterday made a concerted effort to relaunch economic and monetary union, saying it was economically necessary and politically possible. But the arrangements they set out spell trouble for Britain, because they would begin to create a two-tier EU.

The French Finance Minister, Jean Arthuis, said after a Franco-German summit that Bonn and Paris were determined to launch a single currency by the 1999 deadline laid down in the Maastricht Treaty. He said both countries were confident of the prospects for economic recovery and added that they were resolutely determined to reduce their public deficits. His counterpart, Theo Waigel, said the economic upturn was interrupted but Germany was not headed for a recession.

The two were meeting for their half-yearly council in Laval, 300 km west of Paris, where Mr Arthuis is mayor. For the first time, the details of how monetary union might operate politically and in the foreign-exchange markets were spelt out. Mr Arthuis said France and Germany agreed on the need for a system governing exchange-rate relations between those who join a single European currency in 1999 and those who stay outside.

The exchange-rate mechanism would allow for "intervention by the European central bank, with the euro as the anchor-point," Mr Arthuis said. "We do not want to make way for competitive devaluations." And he called for a council of ministers from countries within monetary union to set economic

BUILDING EUROPE

economic policy after a single currency had been launched. "We are talking about a council made up of ministers in the third phase (of European monetary union)." Mr Waigel said any change in the timetable for Europe's monetary union could lead to problems on the foreign-exchange



Jacques Chirac: 'France on course for joining'

market. "We plan to stick to the timetable, since everything else could lead to exchange-rate tensions."

Hans Tietmeyer, the Bundesbank president, also said the central bank supports monetary union and plans to meet the prescribed timetable. "I believe the start-date must be kept in the sense that the con-

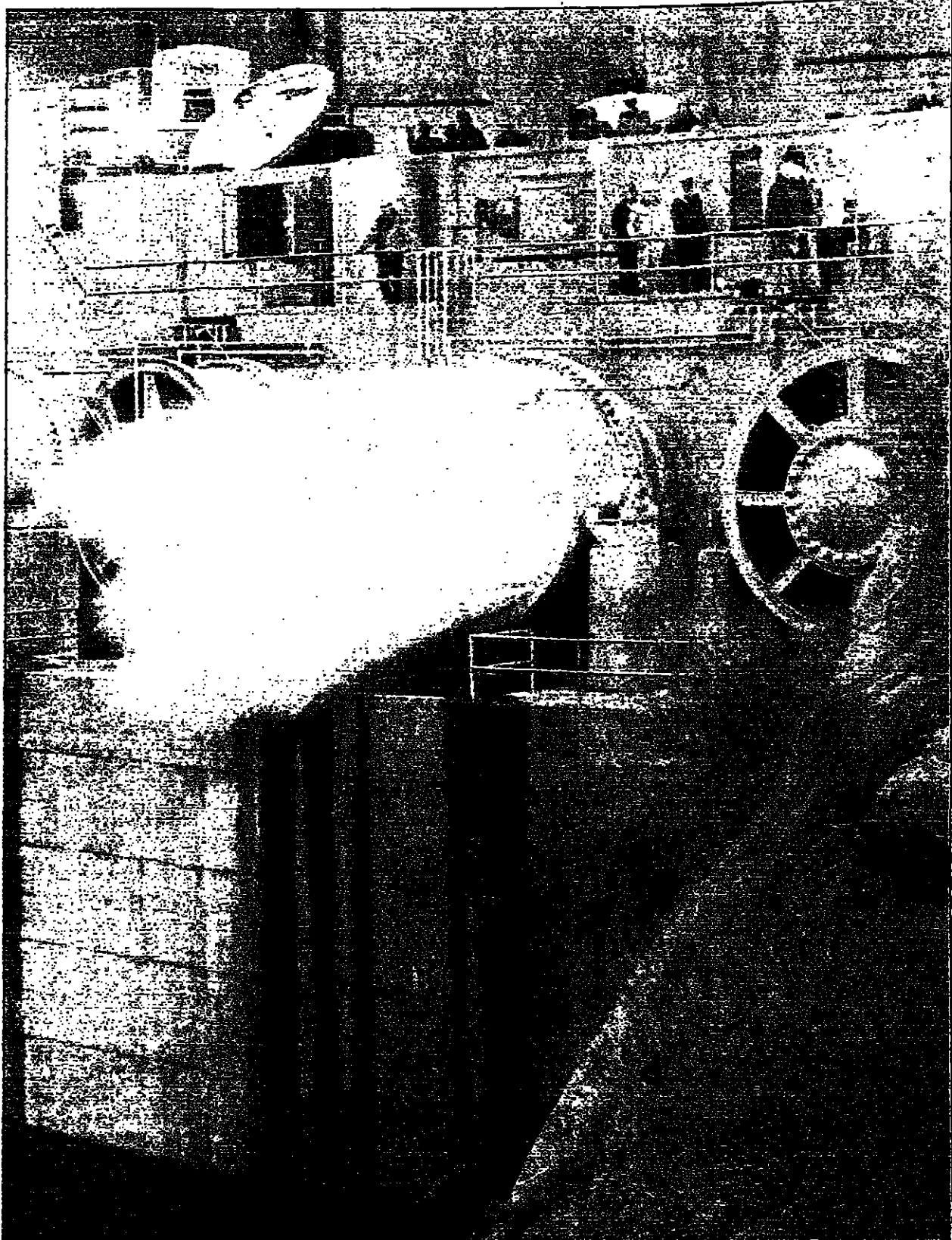
ditions are fulfilled in such a way to make the currency union a stability union." There has been little sign of enthusiasm for monetary union in the Bundesbank so far, it has expressed fears that if handled badly, it could create financial and economic turmoil.

But Mr Tietmeyer added that a "stability pact" was necessary for monetary union to be a success. This is a proposal to enforce strict limits on public debt and deficits after EU nations form a single currency.

Mr Waigel emphasised that he felt automatic sanctions to punish nations that overstep the boundaries of the Maastricht Treaty criteria were the best way to ensure fiscal discipline. "I think automatic sanctions are better than if a group has to convene to make the decision."

The French Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, yesterday published instructions to ministers to ensure preparations for introducing the euro were in place in good time for the planned introduction of the coinage on 1 July, 2002. The instruction, issued days before the opening of the Intergovernmental Conference in Turin, seemed designed to reinforce the message conveyed by President Jacques Chirac in a newspaper article that France was politically and economically on course to meet the deadline for joining the currency.

French officials fear the countries on the edge of the single currency should not be able to profit from "competitive devaluation" - attracting jobs to their countries and buyers for their goods by reducing prices against the single currency and so placing the single-currency countries at a disadvantage.



Turning on the tap: Water starting to pour from an 8ft tube at the base of Glen Canyon dam in Page, Arizona, in a first-time experiment on the flooding of the Colorado River, which runs through the Grand Canyon. Photograph: AP

Christine Ockrent resigns from top magazine

Paris — One of France's leading media figures, Christine Ockrent, resigned yesterday as director and editor in chief of *L'Express*, the nation's highest circulation weekly magazine, writes Mary Dejevsky. Her resignation came five months after a change in the magazine's ownership and a week after a statement by the new owners, part of the giant Havas group, that they wanted it to "become closer to the readers".

Although the author of the words, Christian Bregou of CEF Communications denied that his remarks implied a change of editorial direction - down-market and away from the political and foreign coverage Ms Ockrent had favoured - his comment was widely interpreted as a sign that Ms Ockrent's days in the magazine's chair were numbered.

In a letter to staff yesterday, she said she was leaving "with head held high and a generous heart" but went on: "It is clear that the owners of *L'Express* have a different vision of what the magazine should be."

Ms Ockrent also presents an influential late-night political programme on one of France's two state-owned television channels. In a radical redesign of the magazine last autumn, she introduced more pictures and what was regarded at the time as a more "television" style of presentation. The changes were credited with increasing the magazine's readership by almost one-third.

The increase was not maintained, however, and year-end figures showed the left-of-centre *Nouvel Observateur* overtaking *L'Express* in domestic sales. Only *L'Express*'s foreign sales kept it at the top.

While editorial and personal differences - her strong and, some say, difficult personality divided the magazine's staff - are the immediate reason for Ms Ockrent's departure, her resignation is also a symptom of a gradual shift in the French media and business establishment as those associated with the political left give way to those more in tune with the prevailing political direction.

Although *L'Express* mostly seems politically neutral, if anything leaning slightly to the right, Ms Ockrent is associated with the left wing and married - like several leading French journalists - to a politician, Bernard Kouchner, the former socialist minister and founder of Médecins sans Frontières.

The new director of *L'Express* is expected to be Denis Jeambar, former head of the Europe 1 radio station.

London to Bordeaux in seven hours on new French railway

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

The creation of an integrated Europe-wide high-speed rail network moved a little closer yesterday with the announcement of the start of a range of new cross-border services.

SNCF, the French state railway, announced the launch from 2 June of a new high-speed service linking Paris with Brussels and Amsterdam. The trains will take just over two hours to the Belgian capital, cutting 40 minutes off the existing times and making it much more com-

petitive with air travel. Amsterdam will take four and three-quarter hours from Paris. However, when the Belgian high-speed line is completed in 1998, Paris-Brussels will take just one hour 25 minutes.

A red and grey fleet of trains, under the Thalys brand, has been introduced which can be used on French, Belgian and Dutch railways even though they have different electrical systems. A train which can also run to Cologne in Germany, which uses yet another voltage, is being introduced in 1998.

SNCF hopes that within 10

years most of the large conurbations of north-west Europe will be linked by high-speed trains running at 300kph (186mph) on dedicated lines and 230kph (136mph) on upgraded conventional lines.

The 2 June launch date also sees the completion of the rail by-pass round Paris which opens the way for British travellers on Eurostar to reach cities on the TGV Atlantique line, such as Bordeaux and Nantes, with just one change at Lille. Bordeaux is five hours from Lille, while Nantes is just under four hours.

Paris owns up to secret sculpture plot

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

The latest spectacular plan in the Parisian tradition of pioneering exhibitions and grand municipal projects comes to fruition next month when the city's most famous thoroughfare forms the backdrop for a unique sculpture exhibition.

Work began yesterday to install more than 50 works of 20th-century sculpture, taken mostly from Paris sites and collections, on a kilometre-long stretch of the Champs Elysées between the Place de la Concorde and the Rond Point, where six avenues converge.

The exhibition was supposed to have been kept a secret. Paris commuters, the city council had hoped, would emerge from the Concorde and Champs Elysées metro stations one morning to be surprised and delighted by the sight before them.

But the secret was broken last weekend by a discreet announcement in the *Figaro* newspaper's colour magazine, which said that Parisians in the know were talking of nothing else and the secret would out.

Everyone wanted to know, the magazine said, how on earth a four-ton Picasso was going to be moved to a central Paris pavement, and how a

trick of lighting would make the obelisk on the Place de la Concorde appear in the middle of a work by Yves Klein.

A spokesman for Paris town hall yesterday confirmed that musings of this kind were not mere wishful thinking or premature April foolishness. The exhibition is to open on 11 April and last two months.

The works are to be arranged in chronological order and are presented as landmarks in the sculpture of this century. As well as the Picasso and the Klein, the exhibition will include three Rodins, a Miro, a Giacometti and a Léger. The British sculptors Henry Moore, Barbara

Hepworth and Helen Chadwick will also be represented.

One purpose of the exhibition is to celebrate the completion of a five-year project to restore the Champs Elysées as the promenade that its 17th-century architect intended. The road has been narrowed, the pavements widened - by more than 60 feet - and a second line of plane trees planted to give its lower reaches a more park-like feel.

The sculpture exhibition is intended not only to show off some of the most distinguished pieces of modern sculpture, but also to demonstrate that the Champs Elysées is once more for strolling.

This week in

THE INDEPENDENT

This week and every week, Section Two has a completely new look, with more pages, new features, a daily radio column and an expanded listings section providing Britain's most comprehensive daily guide to going out.

on Monday

A new section focusing on Family Life, beginning with an investigation into how children's television is threatening the family unit. In the centre pages, each week we challenge the personalities and institutions that have become icons of Nineties life. On Monday, we ask: Do we need Start the Week? Plus: In the second part of our series on the making of the modern girl, we examine teenage attitudes to sex, relationships

and marriage.

and in Sport

A 24-page section with all the action from a big weekend of sport. Plus: Part one of a major investigation into the crisis afflicting English cricket. Where does our summer game go from here? And the Monday interview with Alan Shearer, the striker who doesn't mind not scoring goals for England.

on Tuesday

Part three of the making of the modern girl: how the Nineties generation gets what it wants. Plus: Health - a new treatment for chronic fatigue.

Also on Tuesday, fashion, architecture, visual arts and media. Our new back pages section introduces a weekly feature on the history of popular culture.

on Wednesday

Theatre, midweek travel section, your money, finance and law. Plus - Final part of the making of the modern girl: what the future holds for the teenager of the Nineties

In our back pages, Martin Newell, Britain's leading rock poet, and Neil Kerber, one of the country's funniest cartoonists, present their views of the modern world.

on Thursday

All our regular features, including Dilemmas, John Walsh's column, plus film, education and graduate

plus. In the back pages, William Hartston's history of the world in 10 1/2 inches

on Friday

24Seven - a brand new 20-page pull-out-and-keep entertainment and listings section. Including a complete day-by-day planner for the week ahead, plus

seven-day TV, radio and satellite listings, ticket offers and informed comment on the week's highlights



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Subversion law causes Slovak uproar

ADRIAN BRIDGE
Bratislava

Amid furious accusations of a revival of Communist repression, the Slovak parliament yesterday ratified a controversial new law aimed at protecting the state against subversion.

The debate on the so-called Law on the Protection of the Republic provoked uproar on opposition benches, where speakers denounced it as a throwback to the legislation of the Communist era and a fur-

ther blow to Slovakia's already tarnished international image.

Opposition deputies banged their desks and jeered as news came through that the law had been approved by a margin of 77 to 57. Peter Weiss, leader of the Party of the Democratic Left (SDL), said the law would limit freedom of expression, assembly and information and promised to challenge it in the constitutional court.

Other speakers compared some of the law's provisions with a similar "anti-subversion"

measure passed in 1948 by the Communist government of the then Czechoslovakia.

Under the law, technically an amendment to the criminal code, Slovak citizens could face two years' imprisonment if found guilty of "disseminating false information abroad damaging to the interests of the republic".

Other clauses point to stiff penalties for organisers of public rallies judged to be aimed at subverting the constitutional system, territorial integrity or

defence capability of the country.

The government insists that the law complies with accepted international norms, but critics say the vagueness of its wording leaves it open to a wide variety of interpretation and that, in the wrong hands, it could be used to silence opposition.

Western diplomats, some of whom in the past have openly questioned Slovakia's progress towards democracy, have also sought clarification of the new legislation.

The Law on the Protection of the Republic is one of a package of tough new laws believed to be part of a deal agreed between the Prime Minister, Vladimir Meciar, and the far-right Slovak National Party (SNS), a junior partner in his ruling coalition.

In return for Mr Meciar's agreement to introduce the new measures, nationalist MPs agreed to support his attempt to win parliamentary backing for a Basic Treaty with Hungary agreed in principle just over a

year ago. Last night the treaty, which was approved by the Hungarian parliament last summer, was ratified by Slovak MPs by 119 to 1.

Under the Basic Treaty, Hungary accepts the inviolability of its border with Slovakia in return for guarantees concerning the rights of Slovakia's 600,000 ethnic Hungarian minority.

Both Bratislava and Budapest hope that the agreement shows the two countries have put old animosities aside and will there-

by strengthen their bids to join the European Union and Nato.

While welcoming the Basic Treaty, representatives of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia remain extremely mistrustful of the government in Bratislava.

Ethnic Hungarian leaders say that a law passed late last year enshrining Slovak as the only official language clearly goes against the spirit of the treaty. They are also alarmed by the new anti-subversion law, fearing that it will be used against them.

IN BRIEF

The Queen pledges support for Poland

Warsaw — The Queen assured Poles yesterday that Britain would support their efforts to join the European Union and Nato. In a speech to parliament she recalled close ties with Poland during the Second World War. "We will never forget ... the courage of the Polish pilots, part of the 'few' to whom Churchill rightly said so much was owed," she said. *AP*

Shrine siege ends

Srinagar — About 17 armed separatist guerrillas ended a two-day occupation of Kashmir's holiest shrine last night, leaving the buildings peacefully after an agreement with the Indian government. A rebel spokesman denied the guerrillas had surrendered. *Reuters*

Russians accused

Vienna — Russian soldiers have used excessive force, and engaged in robbery, looting and arson in their offensive against rebels in Chechnya, said a report by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, which also criticised the rebels for hostage-taking. *AP*

77-year exile ends

Vienna — The government ended a 77-year-long entry ban on two aged sons of Austria's last emperor, Karl I, who abdicated in 1919, agreeing to issue them with valid passports. *AP*

President testifies

Bogota — The Colombian President, Ernesto Samper, testified yesterday in a widening investigation that could lead to his impeachment on charges that his 1994 election campaign was bankrolled by Cali drug lords. *Reuters*

Carter aide dies

Washington — Edmund Muskie, former Secretary of State under President Carter, died yesterday at 81 after a heart attack. He was briefly a contender for the presidential nomination in 1972. *Reuters*

Bahrain firing squad

Manama — A Bahraini anti-government protester, found guilty of murdering a police sergeant last year, was executed by firing squad. *Reuters*

Shere ambition

Bonn — The American feminist Shere Hite said she has become a German citizen and may use her new status to run for the European parliament. *Reuters*

Kabul's jets try to drive off rebels

Kabul (Reuters) — Afghan government jets bombed rebel positions outside the capital yesterday, killing up to 50 people, the Defence Ministry said.

An official said 20 people were also wounded as the jets hit Charasyab, 25 kilometres (15 miles) from Kabul, where commanders of the Taliban Islamic militia were meeting to discuss plans for their war against the government. There was no independent confirmation of the report.

Earlier, a Pakistan-based Afghan news service said forces loyal to President Burhanuddin Rabbani also directed artillery fire at Charasyab.

The Taliban reoccupied Charasyab in October, six months after losing it to government forces, and have frequently shelled Kabul from hills to the south and west of the city. Yesterday's attacks came amid rumours that the government would soon launch an offensive to drive the Taliban out of artillery range of the capital.

Taliban sources said 300 clerics invited to a meeting to discuss making a peace offer to Kabul had reached the southern town of Kandahar, the militia's headquarters. The meeting could start in a day or two.

The council of the clerics, from 15 Taliban-held provinces and other parts of the country, has the authority to decide whether to pursue war or negotiate peace with Mr Rabbani.



Capital losses: The remains of a Kabul street. The government is said to be preparing an attempt to drive rebels beyond artillery range of the city. Photograph: Tom Pilsten



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NAT WEST	£3,000	16.9%	£105.05	£3,781.80
	£6,000	15.9%	£207.54	£7,471.44
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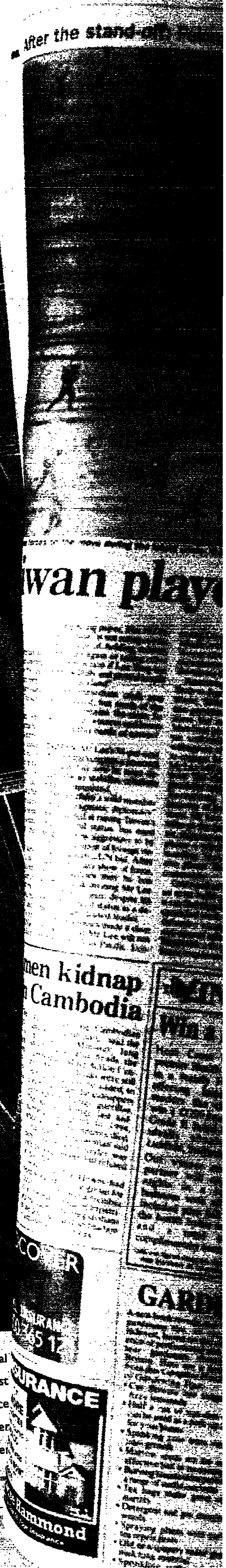
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After the stand-off: Peking loses face but Taipei realises that there is no short-term solution



Iron fist: Chinese forces on the move during the latest crisis. It has prompted an arms build-up by the Taiwanese, who are to get US missiles

Photograph: Reuters

Taiwan players weigh next move

TERESA POOLE
Taipei

In central Taipei yesterday afternoon workmen were clinging perilously to the side of the Chinese Bank building, disrobing it of a billowing 10-storey-high election portrait of President Lee Teng-hui.

Four days after Taiwan's presidential polls, the bunting has come down. Peking has stopped lambasting Mr Lee as a traitor to the motherland and one of two US aircraft-carriers in the region, the *Independence*, is preparing to move away. But now the dust has settled and the immediate threat of military conflict eased, what has been changed by the sound and fury surrounding the island's election?

In Peking, the Foreign Ministry spokesman reiterated the possibility of reopening talks but only on condition Taipei dropped all "official, governmental or state-to-state relations with the outside world" and abandoned its attempt to be recognised by the United Nations. A Peking-controlled

Hong Kong paper, *Wen Wei Po*, said China "is not ruling out the possibility of holding military exercises again or taking other military action if Lee Teng-hui acted wilfully and plotted to split the motherland".

The immediate crisis may have passed, but much of the rhetoric remains the same. So who are the winners and losers so far in this battle of nerves?

TAIWAN: Mr Lee's 54-per-cent share of the vote was a personal triumph, but now he must decide how to stabilise relations with the mainland.

He can claim a solid mandate for his "pragmatic diplomacy" policy, aimed at raising Taiwan's international status, but must weigh up how aggressive to be over the question of foreign visits and Taiwan's UN bid. After China's military show of force, other countries may be less willing to risk inviting Mr Lee for "private" visits, despite his newly enhanced status as a democratically elected leader.

The Philippines made it clear this week that Mr Lee will not attend the Asia-Pacific Eco-

nomic Co-operation summit in Manila in November. As before, Taiwan can only send ministerial representatives, which many Taiwanese feel is an insult.

Restarting negotiations is likely to depend on Peking's attitude. Taiwan's leaders want to resume but not at any price. Mainland preconditions could yet undermine the apparent willingness of the two sides to re-engage. In any concessions, Mr Lee will be under pressure from the domestic pro-independence opposition; the ruling Kuomintang party now has a majority of just one in parliament. Mr Lee is likely to offer talks on the three direct links - air, shipping and post and telephone - which Peking is demanding. Such a move would also please Taiwan's business community.

One result of the crisis will be an arms build-up by Taiwan, if it can find suppliers. The US decision last week to supply more defensive weapons, including anti-aircraft missiles, still leaves Taipei with a shopping-list of defence requirements, including

more submarines and anti-missile equipment.

CHINA: Peking has suffered a serious loss of face over its attempt to scare voters away from Mr Lee. But it has driven home the point that its refusal to renounce the use of force against Taiwan is not something the world can dismiss lightly.

Strategy towards Taiwan is in flux as the leadership considers its options. Given the behind-the-scenes factional struggles, it can take months for policy disputes to be resolved. The mainland itself slammed the door on the unofficial talks last year, and China's leaders cannot be seen to be climbing down.

One question is whether army hardliners want to push, as rumoured, for a specific reunification timetable, or whether some vague restatement of the Kuomintang's One China policy will suffice.

Since the election, the immediate target of Peking's wrath has switched from Mr Lee to Washington's new arms sales to Taiwan. Pentagon support of Taiwan has reinforced Peking's

view that the US is increasingly bent on containing China.

Over the next few weeks, Peking will carefully monitor Mr Lee's actions and words. If People's Liberation Army leaders are made to feel humiliated, they still have tens of thousands of troops in Fujian province, across the water from Taiwan. If Peking decides Mr Lee is misbehaving, there could be another show of force at the time of his formal inauguration on 20 May.

UNITED STATES: Washington believes the immediate crisis has passed, but knows that Sino-US relations remain in a perilous state, with Taiwan the most sensitive issue. Winston Lord, assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, said this week: "We will not get in the middle, we will not mediate, we will not broker."

The problem for the US is that it is already central to the drama. As Mr Lord said, referring to US relations with China, it was "no secret that over the coming months we face a series of minefields".

including possible US sanctions over Peking's nuclear sales to Pakistan. The situation is further complicated by US politics in a presidential election year, and the vote-losing potential of appearing soft on China. Nevertheless, the Clinton administration is likely privately to lean heavily on Mr Lee to reduce his international forays.

In June the US and Taiwan were surprised by the ferocity of China's reaction to Mr Lee's US visa. This month, it was Peking's turn to be taken aback by the despatch of two US aircraft-carriers to the region.

A new status quo has yet to emerge. For Taiwan there is no short-term solution. It took four decades for China and Taiwan just to talk to each other at a non-governmental level. Peking's leadership has little understanding of the profound changes that have taken place in what it insists is a renegade province. At the same time, most Taiwanese have no idea of the intense nationalism that is now Communist Party creed on the mainland, and how that threatens Taiwan.

Armed men kidnap Briton in Cambodia

Phnom Penh (Reuters) — The Cambodian government is negotiating for the release of a British mine disposal specialist and his interpreter, who were among up to 29 disposal workers seized by armed men yesterday, according to the British-based Mines Advisory Group.

The group said that its employee Christopher Howes, from Bristol, and 28 Cambodians had been seized in Siem Reap province.

A government minister earlier put the number kidnapped from the Sway Chek commune, north-west of the capital Phnom Penh, at up to 24. "We learnt that 12 people had escaped and later on the kidnappers released 10 Cambodians. They are

still holding one Cambodian and an Englishman," said the Information Minister, Ieng Mouly, who also heads the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC). Checks were still being carried out, he added, to confirm whether the kidnappers were Khmer Rouge guerrillas. The Khmer Rouge last kidnapped foreigners in 1994, when at least six captives died.

An MAG spokeswoman said negotiations were under way with the kidnappers, but refused to give details.

MAG said Mr Howes had been working for the group for three years, and was a member of a five-man team of expatriate specialists training civilians in the detection and destruction of anti-personnel mines.

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Handwritten text in Arabic script: "مكتبة المجلد"

Edmund Muskie

Muskie's role was not to get involved in the detail of negotiations, for example, over the return of the American hostages in Tehran. That, and much else of the detail, was left to the Deputy Secretary, Warren Christopher, now President Clinton's Secretary of State. But Carter wrote in his

Johnson made it plain to Muskie and other freshman senators that, if they went along with a conservative version of an amendment to Rule 22, one that would effectively enable the South to postpone civil rights

His long career in the Senate was characterised by solid work rather than by glamorous speechifying or the sponsorship of famous legislation. His somewhat dour approach to politics was well illustrated by his remark when asked for a com-

democratic Whip, a job that would have led to his becoming the Senate majority leader in succession to Senator Mike Mansfield in due course. Twenty-nine voters would have been enough to get him the job. It was typical of Muskie that when he

Parke, where he remained a partner until his death. He divided his time between Washington DC and a holiday home at Kennebunk, near President Bush's home. He was one of the co-authors of the Tower report commissioned by President

Godfrey Hodgson
Edmund Sixtus Muskie, lawyer and politician; born Rumford, Maine 28 March 1914; member, Maine House of Representatives

ate Budget Committee 1974-80; Secretary of State 1980-81; senior partner, Chadbourne & Parker 1981-96; author of *Journeys* 1972; married 1948 Jane Gray (two sons, three daughters); died Washington DC 26 March 1996.

Comrades, the whole world is looking to you. On the travels you have sent me on in the last 10 years, I have talked to peasants and presidents in most parts of the world. I have talked in your name to workers in most parts of the world. I have seen the kids and held the babies of all the droves of children of the world and said to me: 'one working class man who said to me: "My ambition in life is to blow you to kingdom come if I have an opportunity." Not one single man. It is leaders.

Whatever you do about this [the disarmament controversy in the Labour Party] remember, if you are multi-far or unilateral, it is still four minutes. If you are multi, you have four minutes and four minutes after you have had it, 50 million in the Soviet Union will have had it. If you are

In October 1979 Hayward arranged that Peter Shore, then shadow Foreign Secretary, Alec Kison, party chairman, Jenny Little, International Secretary of the Labour Party, and I as chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party Foreign Affairs Committee should go to meet Lord Carrington as the new Foreign Secretary. Leaving the door of the Ambassador's waiting room in the Foreign Office, Hayward turned to us and said: "Well, we got more civility, more good sense and a far better hearing from that Tory aristocrat than we ever did from

bloody David Owen." That Owen had been Foreign Secretary in a government of a party of which he was general secretary and had treated himself and those who thought like him so shabbily incensed Hayward beyond measure.

Owenseth Dunwoody, another member of the National Executive who knew Hayward well, recalls: "He was misunderstood by intellectuals, who did not realise that Hayward had a clear understanding of the Labour Party at the grass-roots and at all levels. He was a cheerful anti-intellectual who understood others by a developed instinct and therefore

He was a guardian of the party's traditions and Dunwoody was greatly touched that he should take her into his room in Transport House shortly after he became General Secretary and tell her that he was proud of the fact that he had arranged for his room to be put back exactly as her father Morgan Phillips, the famous post-war General Secretary of the Labour Party, had had it.

Though he was never a supporter of the Common Market it was not the opinions of the Gang of Four which made Hayward see red. (He was tolerant

of views diametrically opposed to his own. It was their behaviour. How on earth could Shirley Williams sit for all those months on the ruling body, the National Executive Committee, the heart of the Labour Party, without letting on that she had it in mind to desert the party for another party? It was beyond his comprehension that senior party colleagues honoured to be secretaries of state in a Labour government could behave in such an underhand way. His reaction in a curious way reflected his own country-values background.

Ron Hayward was born into a family of Oxfordshire small

Labour Party which brought him into contact with Arthur Bottomley, the local MP, and indirectly to the notice of the party leadership.

On Bottomley's strong recommendation he became assistant regional organiser for the London Region in 1950 and in 1959 was promoted to Regional Organiser for the Southern Region of the Labour Party. I remember during the many summer days I spent at the Winchester and Devizes by-elections of May 1964 what a wonderful rapport Ron Hayward very obviously had with the many individual members in an area which was not noted for rock-solid Labour support. He did ex-

Tam Dalrymple
 Ronald George Hayward, politician: born near Chipping Sodbury, Oxfordshire 27 June 1917; Secretary-Agen. Labour Party Banbury Constituency 1943-47; Rochester and Chatham Constituency 1947-50; Assistant Regional Organiser, Labour Party 1950-59, Regional Organiser, Southern Region 1959-69, National Agent 1969-72; General Secretary 1972-82; CBE 1970; married 1943 Phyllis Allen (three daughters); died Birmingham, Kent 22 March 1996.

BIRTHS

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, etc.) should be sent to the Editor, *In Memoriam*, should be sent to the Editor, to the Gazette Editor, Canary Wharf, London E14 5PU, telephoned to 0171-293 2011 (24 hours answering machine 0171-293 2022) or faxed to 0171-293 2014, or charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). Other Gazette announcements (notices, functions, Forthcoming marriages, Marriages) must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a day time telephone number.

The Independent's main switchboard

Marriages

Birthdays

Lord Amery of Lustleigh, former MP. 77. **Mr David** Amery, chairman, Gwyn Ltd, 63; **Miss Ruth Ashton**, former general secretary, Royal College of Midwives, 57; **Mr Robert Bauman**, chairman, British Aerospace, 65; **Professor Alastair Bellingham**, President, Royal College of Pathologists, 58; **Sir Louis Blom-Cooper**, QC, Independent Commissioner for the Holding Centres, Northern Ireland, 70; **Lord Callaghan** of Cardiff, former prime minister, 84; **Mr Robert Coban**, choreographer, 71; **Mr Richard Denning**, actor, 46; **Miss Maria Ewing**, opera singer, 46; **Lord Fanshawe** of Richmond, former MP, 79.

Anniversaries

Birthing Ferenc II Rákóczi, of Transylvania, patriot, 1676; Louis XVI, King of France, 1786; Alfred Victor, Comte de Vigny, poet, 1797; Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann, replanner of Paris, 1808; Charles Mackay, poet and journalist, 1814; George Joly Elvey, organist and composer, 1810; Paul-Marie Théodore-Vincent d'Indy, composer, 1851; Sir Freder-

November, 1983: Yuriy Achashevlev, Georgian cosmonaut, killed in an air-traffic accident. 1984: On this day, Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* was published. 1766: the US Navy was formed. 1782: Nikita Khrushchev became chairman of the Council of Ministers in the Soviet Union. 1958: a United Nations Peace Force took over in Cyprus. 1964: severe earthquakes and tidal waves were experienced on the US Pacific coast. 1964: at Tenerife, Canary Islands, a Pan Am jumbo jet collided on take-off with

Dinners
The Lord Mayor of Westminster, Mr Alan Bradley, and the Lady Mayoress, Mrs Pamela Barry, were the hosts at the Annual Civic Dinner of

General Dental Council
Lord Worff of Barnes delivered the Wilfred Fish Lecture for the General Dental Council yesterday evening at 64 Wimpole St. London W1. His subject was "Self-Regulation: dentists, disciplining and de-fusing". Dr. Margaret

Weavers' Company
Mr J.G.V. Radcliffe, Upper Balif, Worsley, presented the company's annual Textile Awards at a ceremony held yesterday at Saddlers' Hall, London EC2. Miss Caroline Charles was the principal guest. Among the awards presented were:

Young Weaver of the Year, Jody Ingram, Textile Academy, Royal College of Art and Bolton Institute of Higher Education;
Weaver's Company Medal and Prize, Ms J.R. Cowin, Design Awards, Royal Society of Arts, Textprint, Design Trust, and Royal College of Art; Heritage Award, Northern Textile

[illegible]

European Engineers
The following have been awarded the qualification European Engineer by the European Federation of National Engineering Associations (FEANI):

C. Ahmad; Kishan, S.S. Anandusamy; C. Anderson; J.L. Anon; Smith, R. Azad; G.A.B. Bailey; S. Battersby; C. Bishop; R. Blake; T. Blazynski; A. Blyth; E. Bate; M. Cheshire; C.L. Christodoulou; E. Crippen; S.G. Cox

The Queen, was attended by 1,000 visitors at Edinburgh, upon a State Visit to the Commonwealth. The Princess Royal, President of the Royal Yachting Association, opened the Council Meeting. Royal Thames Yacht Club, London S.W.1. The Duchess of York, President, Miss Curle Curle-Care, attended a reception, the Mansion House, London E.C.4.

Changing of the Guard.
The Household Cavalry performed a ceremonial march on the Ontario War Cemetery at Horse Guards, 11am.

Ron Hayward

great respect for his energy, but the way some of you talk you are the last people I would go behind the sandbags with, because the first car that backed up you would be over the wall.

It was part of Ron Hayward's make-up that he should be imbued with a service spirit of comradeship which he brought to the Labour Party from the wartime RAF. On demobilisation, idealistically wanting to improve the post-war world, he became secretary and agent to the Banbury Labour Party and in 1949 went to Rochester and Chatham Labour Party which brought him into contact with Arthur Bottomley, the local MP and indirectly to the notice of the party leadership.

When it became necessary to appoint a successor to Sir Harry Nicholas as General Secretary of the party the choice was between Gwyn Morgan, for 10 years the energetic and bright International Secretary of the party, and Hayward. On the casting vote of Tony Benn as chairman by 15 votes to 14 Hayward was chosen.

Those colleagues who remain in the Labour Party, especially those who rowed the most with him, will remember Ron and Phyllis Hayward as wonderful comrades sincerely committed to the ideals that they espoused and continued to espouse throughout their immensely worthwhile lives.

Tam Dalyell
Ronald George Hayward, politician: born near Chipping Sodbury, Oxfordshire 27 June 1917; Secretary-Agent, Labour Party, Banbury Constituency 1945-47; Rochester and Chatham Constituency 1947-50; Assistant Regional Organiser, Labour Party 1950-59, Regional Organiser, Southern Region 1959-60, National Agent 1960-72; General Secretary 1972-82; CBE 1970; married 1943 Phyllis Allen (three daughters); died, Burchington, Kent 22 March 1996.

حزب الله الاسلامي

Charles Arthur traces the discovery of the agent that is accused of spreading BSE from cows to humans

The killer protein

A simple protein, rather like those you find in eggs or in the cells of any animal's body, is eating away at Britain's beef industry, threatening it with destruction. Known as a prion, this mysterious protein lies behind the unfolding BSE crisis. For it is the "prion" which seems to explain why humans may contract the fatal brain disease Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) as a result of eating food contaminated with mad cow disease, or BSE.

Prions are "rogue" forms of normal proteins. They defy conventional scientific knowledge. We know that they work to terrifying effect on the brain, eating it away and turning it into sponge. What we cannot explain yet is how they work.

Prions act in the place where chemistry and geometry intersect. Many scientists now think that CJD and BSE diseases are not triggered by a conventional infection caused by a virus or a bacteria. Instead it seems they are set off by an entirely new infectious mechanism: a protein that abruptly changes shape, like a child's bendy toy, which then sets off a disastrous chain reaction in other cells.

BSE, CJD and scrapie – the form of the disease takes in sheep – differ significantly from the sorts of diseases we learn about at school. Conventional thinking says infectious diseases are caused by bacteria and viruses – living agents with their own genetic instructions encoded in DNA (or its chemical and genetic relative, RNA). They invade a host cell and their genetic material sets that cell to work making copies of the invading cells, which then infect more host cells.

The first step in the discovery of the entirely different infectious mechanism came in 1957, when two scientists studying tribes in Papua New Guinea noted a disease that the natives called *kuru*, or "the laughing death". It was a disorder in which loss of co-ordination was rapidly followed by dementia and death. It was spread because the tribespeople indulged in ritual cannibalism. But the scientists' research found no infectious agent to explain the disease. The first clue that something else was at work was a strange sponge-like appearance to the victims' brains.

That same sponge-like appearance is found in cows that die of BSE. Here too the infectious agent is elusive – yet incredibly hardy. You can do a lot to infected tissue samples: douse them in antiseptics, boil them in water, shine ultraviolet light or even high-energy gamma rays on them. Any one of those would destroy a bacterium or a virus. But not BSE, CJD or scrapie.

The turning point in the understanding of these diseases came in 1972. Stanley Prusiner, a neurologist

Prions: when changing shape means death



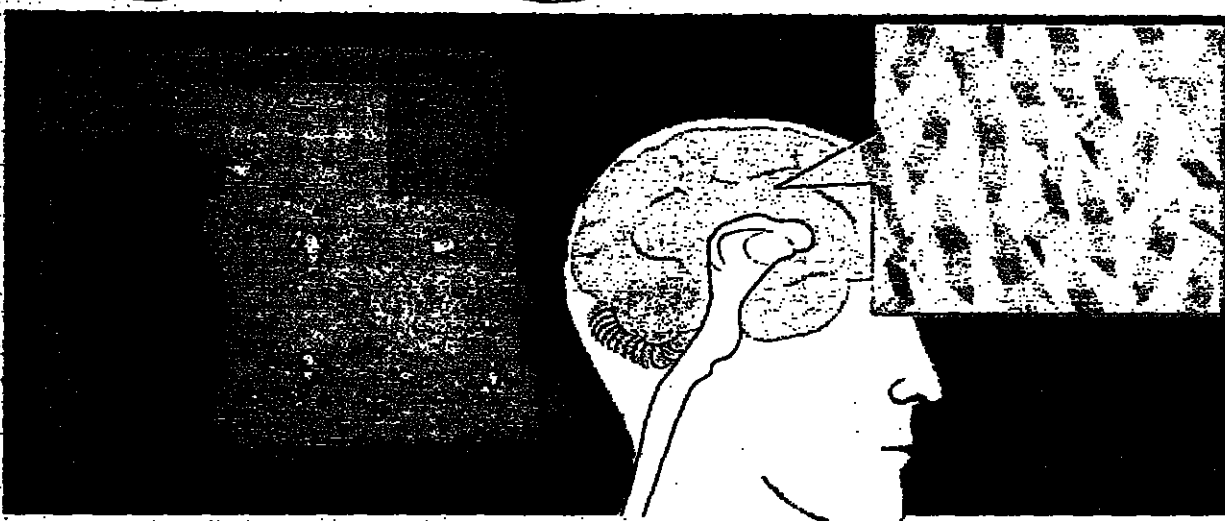
The prion is a standard protein that changes shape – apparently spontaneously – and then causes brain degeneration and death.

1) The normal form of the PrP protein exists in the "folded" shape in many cells of the body. Its exact function is unknown.

2) Somehow, the protein "flips" to a stretched form. Because it originates in the body, the defence mechanism of the white blood cells does not break it down. The "flipped" PrP or prion protein, now begins to affect the normal version in other cells in the body.

3) "Flipped" copies of the PrP protein gather in brain cells, where they cause fibrous deposits – "plaques" – which cause the cells to die and collapse.

4) Post-mortem examination shows how the collapsed cells leave the brain with a sponge-like appearance, shot through with holes.



How we might catch CJD from BSE

1) Meal infected with prions from a cow with BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) is eaten.

2) Prion proteins that cause BSE in cattle are absorbed through the stomach wall.

3) Over a period of time – which may be between 10 and 30 years – the prion protein spreads throughout the body and "encourages" normal copies of the same protein in the body to change shape to the diseased form.

4) Diseased forms of the prion protein begin to gather in the brain and spinal tissues, where they lead to degeneration of the grey matter. Eventually CJD sets in, leading to dementia and death within a year or two.

Graphic: Jim Pavlidis

at the University of California's school of medicine in San Francisco, watched one of his patients die from CJD. Upset, but intrigued, he began reading the scientific literature on CJD and related conditions – which he found electrifying. Finding the infectious agent became his life's work.

After setting up a laboratory in 1974, it took Prusiner and his colleagues eight years to establish two facts: the infectious agent involved in these diseases was unaffected by any process that would destroy DNA or RNA, yet it lost its effect when treated with substances that broke down proteins.

In his first significant publication on the topic, in 1982, he dubbed the agent a "prion" (he pronounces it "pre-on", though most people find "pry-on" easier on the ear), for "proteinaceous infectious particle". His research team subsequently established that the scrapie prion contained only one protein, which they dubbed PrP – for "prion protein".

Prusiner's iconoclastic suggestion that something without any genetic element could cause an infectious illness "evoked a good deal of scepticism", he observes. There was also the question of where PrP came from in the first place. That was answered when sci-

Human PrP genes and proteins differ quite substantially from those of cattle, but not by so much that it rules out BSE passing from cows to humans

entists discovered several animals – hamsters, mice, cats, elk, mink, sheep and humans – have genes that control the making of PrP.

But if we all produce PrP, why doesn't everyone die of CJD? "One interpretation was that we had made a terrible mistake and that PrP had nothing to do with prion diseases," Prusiner said later. But

then he recalled that the biological action of most proteins depends on their physical shape – the way their molecular constituents are folded together. (Why proteins, which stand as long, simple chains of amino acids manufactured by genes, spontaneously fold into the shapes they

teins found in cells as part of the body's self-regulation. Enzymes are like locks: only the correct shape of protein fits them. Experiments at the University of California showed that "scrapie" PrP resisted being broken down by protease enzymes, while normal healthy PrP did not. Chemically they were the same protein; but geometrically they were different shapes. A build-up of diseased PrP proteins, then, would throw a body's self-regulation out of kilter because they are immune to enzymes.

What Prusiner could not explain was why the "scrapie" PrP had a different shape, and more importantly why it seemed able to encourage other proteins to change shape as well. Prusiner decided to investigate other "prion diseases" in humans. In 1988, he obtained copies of a PrP gene from a man with a disease, known as Gerstmann-Sträussler-Scheinker disease, which resembles CJD. Prusiner's team found a tiny mutation in the man's gene. Out of 750 "instructions" – called base pairs – on the gene's DNA, a single

do remains one of the greatest unsolved mysteries in modern biology.) Prusiner's next step was to suggest that there could be two shapes of PrP: the normal form found in healthy mammals and the diseased, "scrapie" form. This was confirmed by experiments with enzymes called proteases, which break down pro-

teins found in cells as part of the body's self-regulation. Enzymes are like locks: only the correct shape of protein fits them. Experiments at the University of California showed that "scrapie" PrP resisted being broken down by protease enzymes, while normal healthy PrP did not. Chemically they were the same protein; but geometrically they were different shapes. A build-up of diseased PrP proteins, then, would throw a body's self-regulation out of kilter because they are immune to enzymes.

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one was unusual. This meant that instead of making the amino acid proline, as a healthy PrP gene would, it made one called leucine. That, in turn, meant that the PrP protein was a different shape. As long as your PrP proteins retain the correct shape, you will remain healthy.

But even after painstaking research over many years, there were still the twin questions of how the infection was spread and how it worked inside a body. Why could "scrapie" PrP easily infect some animals, such as mice, sheep or cows, yet be hard to pass to others, such as hamsters?

Prusiner, with fellow researcher Michael Scott, found that the amino acid sequences of cow and sheep PrP proteins are relatively similar. Prusiner suggests that "the more the sequence of a scrapie PrP molecule resembles the PrP sequence of its host, the more likely it is that the host will acquire prion disease."

Human PrP genes and proteins differ quite substantially from those of cattle, but not by so much that it

rules out BSE passing from cows to humans.

The key to the way the disease spreads through the body is the way PrP changes shape and induces other proteins to follow suit. Experiments at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have shown that when diseased PrP and normal sheep PrP are mixed in a test tube, the normal form converted to the diseased form. There might then be a cascade effect as more and more proteins change shape.

It is known that they become concentrated in the spinal cord and the brain. This concentration of the diseased protein causes cells to die slowly. The collapse of the cells creates the spongy appearance of the brain in post-mortem.

But how many "diseased" proteins are needed to set off the cascade? How long does it take? Can the "flipped" BSE prion induce the normal human prion to flip? To these vital questions, even the crusading Prusiner does not have the answers, yet.

DIARY

Mr Creutzfeldt's big moment

Word reaches me from a young man particularly distressed by the latest CJD scare. While going quietly about his business for the London auctioneers Christie's all week, people keep accosting him to demand if he has something to do with the beef scare. "And then I have to come clean," confesses one Benjamin Creutzfeldt, "that it was my grandfather who first diagnosed the whole thing."

The young Mr Creutzfeldt, long familiar with his grandfather's work, has been so put out by the latest coverage of the disease that he has taken to writing to the papers. "I'm no scientist myself," he concedes, "but the first case my grandfather diagnosed was back in 1913. And it was a woman aged only 23 – which does rather make you wonder why we are reading so much into cases of young people today."

I for one am inclined to be most reassured. Soothing words from a Creutzfeldt himself!

Alas, there is a nasty sting in the tail. "The only thing is," he admits, "she was a butcher's daughter."

The CJD scare has brought Benjamin one unexpected benefit. "For the first time in my life, suddenly everyone can spell my name."

With Kylie you can burn in Hull

One can only speculate about the music to which one burns in hell. What we do now know is the music to which one burns in Hull. It is Kylie Minogue's chart-topping single "I Should Be So Lucky".

The local council has been forced to employ an extra technician at the city crematorium to cope with the strain, since the people of Hull are increasingly choosing their favourite pop tunes to accompany them to the



other side instead of more traditional hymns. According to John Le Neveu, the assistant director of leisure services, "It has created a lot of work, making sure the tapes are set up correctly and so we have had to employ another technician."

The alternative to Kylie (above) is "Simply the Best" by Tina Turner, although one man decided to be more literal, and was accompanied

into the furnace by the inevitable line from Frank Sinatra's "My Way": "And so I face the final curtain."

Krays were a bunch of lightweights

Rifling through old programmes at a party for the 125th birthday of the Royal Albert Hall, I was interested in one long-forgotten event, an International Boxing Tournament in December 1951. The night was unusual in having three brothers fighting on the same bill, the only time the three did so. One's heart

goes out to their opponents. The bruvvers were the welterweight Charlie Kray and the lightweight Reggie and Ronnie of the same surname.



Nice one, Selina

Guests at the British Television Advertising Awards were somewhat startled to hear Selina Scott announce the winners of the prize for public service advertising.

Many years in front of the camera have still, it seems, not wiseden the winsome presenter to the perils of the autocue. Up on her screen came the results – last Christmas's controversial "Dave" anti-drink drive ad, made for the Department of Transport and the COI – the Central Office of Information.

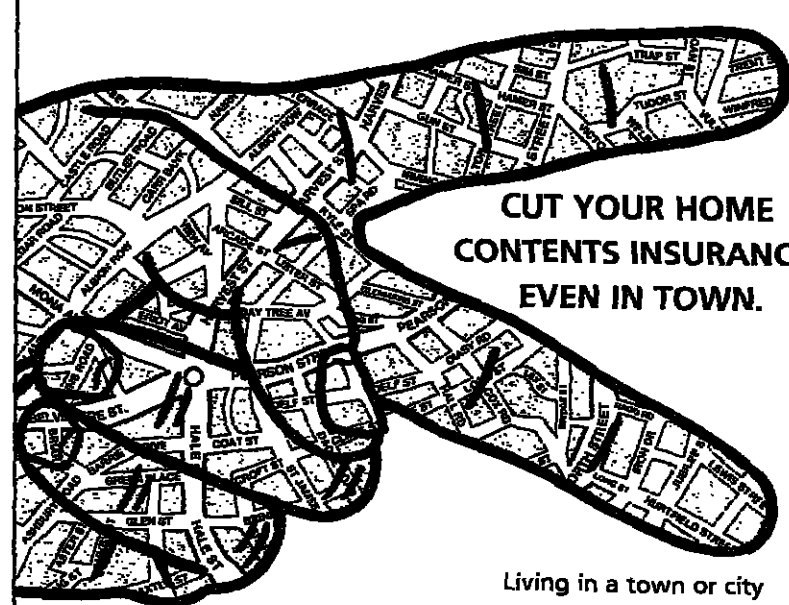
"And the winner is..." she declared. "CO One!" A bemused audience was left marvelling at the audacity of a Department of Transport ad campaign to promote the virtues of carbon monoxide.

Great advert, shame about the facts...

No advertising award for the boarding that the Scottish Widows insurance company has put up in Edinburgh.

It boasts that Sir Walter Scott wrote *Juanhoe*. True. It adds that he sold books by the million. Also true. It concludes with a flourish that he took out a policy with Scottish Widows. Indeed he did: a policy for £3,000 on 20 December 1824. What it neglects to say is that he went bankrupt two years later.

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Punishments to fit the criminal

Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, is his own worst enemy. Yesterday, he had some moderately good news to impart: the third annual fall in recorded crime. Yet even as he delivered the news you could see his credibility draining away. Every one's natural reaction was to ask: where's the catch? That must be the appropriate response since these new figures, welcome as they are, present such a mixed picture that they give no endorsement to Mr Howard's dogmatic penal disciplinarianism.

Detecting and deterring crime is much more complicated than this Home Secretary seems able to admit. Mr Howard seeks to persuade us that crime is governed by straightforward causal relationships. More police on the beat make more arrests and clear up more crimes. Judges, constrained by a tougher sentencing regime laid down by Mr Howard, send more offenders to prison, where they learn the error of their ways. Crime falls: simple as that.

The trouble is, it isn't. Making society safer for law-abiding citizens requires a joint effort by the public and the police, local authorities and companies, the courts and social services. The police are most effective when they act as a catalyst for the public doing more for themselves to police society. Prison is only one form of punishment; we should start to think more imaginatively about other forms of punishment that could be delivered in the community.

The figures published yesterday covered "notifiable offences". These are crimes recorded on police station dockets and fed through the statistical mills. They do not cover much of the crime people experience in their homes or on the streets, much of which goes unreported. Vehicle crime, on official definitions, is down: so is burglary. Yet most people are unlikely to say they feel safer than they did three years ago. Worse, in 1995 there were more homicides and a worrying pickup in crime on the railways. Muggings rose but sexual offences fell. Yet the figures are no cause for cheer: about 100 women a week reported rapes last year.

Movements in the level of recorded crime may not tell us a great deal about which policies are most effective. It may

tell us more about the way crime is reported and recorded. It also tells us something about demographic change. As the population ages, so crime should fall because older people get up to less mischief.

Fighting crime is not unlike fighting unemployment. There is no single unemployment problem but lots of them: the redundant, older, unskilled manual worker is not in the same position as a temporarily unemployed, young, skilled worker. There are also many crime problems: burglaries and vehicle crime demand different responses compared with violent crimes against women. We do not need blanket solutions for "crime"; we need a more forensic approach that distinguishes between offences and wrongdoers and applies to them appropriate schemes of detection, punishment and prevention.

Some of the big sweep schemes in which the Metropolitan Police have led the way – such as Operation Bumblebee – seem to have had some success, usually by heightening public awareness and strengthening the bond between police and public on which effective crime fighting depends. Sir Trevor Morris, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary, says closed-circuit television is having some effect, though it may merely displace crime into adjacent areas.

The fact is, if we locked up a huge proportion of the age group most often implicated in crime, offending would be cut but civil liberties and the public finances would also be ruined. In the real world, policy ought to be targeted at reducing reoffending rates, and exploring more effective routes to make sure young, first-time offenders do not return to crime. These must include a range of non-custodial training and education regimes as well as exploring novel forms of punishment in the community. Tomorrow, Mr Howard announces a new sentencing regime that is likely to ignore not just the objections of judges to straitjacket sentences but the anguish – audible this week at their conference – of the prison governors at the growing strains on the prisons. If he uses these crime figures to justify his policies Mr Howard's political credibility will be visible to all.

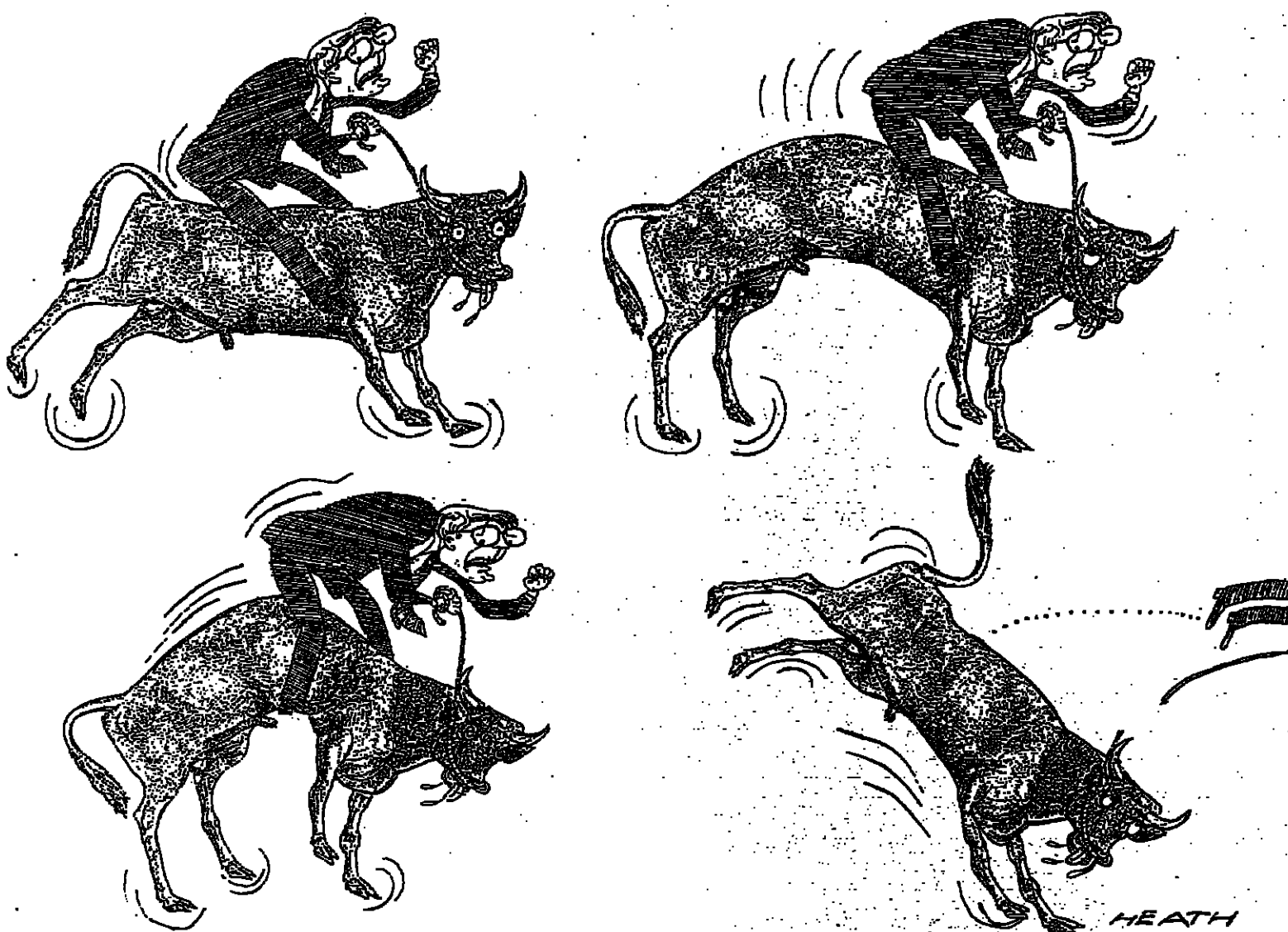
Bringing parks to life

Wary of the strains of urban life, fed up with the television, frustrated by how hard it is to replicate Delia's masterpieces, unable to escape to the countryside, you turn for a breath to your local park. Through the green red and yellow M that adorns the gate, past flower-beds exuding the scent of Body Shop's Dewberry, you head towards the Coca-Cola fountain to feed the ducks. Relaxing on an Ikea painted green wood bench, you watch the children playing on Mr Little Pony rocking horses, safe beneath the benevolent eye of the BSE-B-sponsored closed-circuit television. Every corner of the park glows with colour, cleanliness and corporate sponsored wellbeing.

Such could be the future of the country's public spaces hinted at in a new report for the Department of Environment published this week. The aim of the report is to describe for local authorities the best practice in popular parks across the country. The case studies and descriptions of successful projects to make parks safe and pleasant places for every member of the local community are extremely welcome. Too many green spaces have deteriorated into deserted wasteland, threaded by dangerous walkways where

women and children fear to tread. But the big question for cash-strapped local authorities is how to fund the renaissance of the public park. Imaginative financial solutions suggested by the report include joint ventures with health and education authorities, and involving the private sector through franchising facilities or backing events. Hence the prospects of the park being used as a large advertising hoarding for corporate sponsors. Companies would get the chance to associate their product with recreation, relaxation, freedom and natural beauty. And the community would get the cash to reclaim their public space. It could be a novel and healthy combination of the public and the private and an antidote to the inexorable rise of the private theme park.

That does not mean parks need to rearrange their flower-beds into the shapes of commercial logos. Private finance has always been important to public space. If a few of today's super-rich individuals and wealthy companies exercised the generosity and the restraint of the Victorian philanthropists who built our big city parks, they could set in train a revival in mixed-use public spaces that so many of our cities require.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Beef: 'meat products' may be infected, but only a few people will ever get CJD

Sir: Here are the answers to the questions about BSE/CJD which you posed on the front page on Saturday 23 March.

1. One bite of infective (brain) material might be enough to transmit the disease because it is dose-related but that is unlikely. In any case, most individuals will never develop CJD since only those of a rare genotype are susceptible.

2. Recent research on BSE suggests that beef liver is unsafe. 3. There is no evidence that the "red meat" of BSE-infected animals is any less wholesome than that of scrapie-infected sheep, whose meat we have been swallowing with impunity since 1730. It is the "meat products" (sausages, meat pies, stock cubes and tinned items of "beef" such as consommé and stew) to which brains have been – and calves' brains still are – added which contain the organism.

4. Farmers no doubt watch their pigs but all subclinically infected animals appear quite healthy for years. 5. All poultry appear to be immune. The SEAC researchers are playing safe in barring all mammalian meat from all farm animals.

6. This is not going to be what everybody understands by an "epidemic": we are not dealing with typhoid or tuberculosis or cholera in which everybody indiscriminately gets contaminated. This unique organism causes disease in only a few individuals – those who are genetically susceptible. That's why CJD, in spite of being an infection, is so rare. H C GRANT, MD, FRCP (Neuropathologist) Edinburgh

This leads me to ponder why the disposal of BSE infected carcasses is permissible in landfill sites (not all are incinerated) which are not unknown for their production of polluted effluents? Incidentally, how efficacious are the incinerators employed for carcass destruction and what competent authority spot checks them for their performance in completely destroying tissues, flesh and bones, so that only sterile ash remains? This stricture also applies to open pit burning, which cannot guarantee complete destruction.

A further complicating factor is that abattoir wastes can be spread on or in agricultural land (as "soil improver"). This may be cheap waste disposal but where are the guarantees of environmental and biological safety from these procedures? Deregulation can be carried too far, and insecure disposal of any biologically active animal wastes or remains is the last thing we need. Professor A PORTEOUS Engineering The Open University Milton Keynes

honest and open. Elsewhere there is no such compensation and hence if a farmer is at all concerned about an animal, his best option is to send it to the abattoir. Under these circumstances, one could argue that British production is safer and that the consumer is better protected with UK products. PIERS FEILDEN Martock, Somerset

Sir: Following reports in the *Lancet* of CJD in British teenagers (October 1995) I wrote to my son's headmaster suggesting that a non-beef alternative be always available. It is to the credit of Clifton College that they adopted this proposal at once. I now discover, to my horror, that pork sausages can legally contain up to 20 per cent beef, and that ingredient labelling is not required by law, so those parents who have been enlightened enough to ignore government reassurances on BSE now find that they have been misled by inadequate controls on the labelling of food products. Dr ROBIN RUSSELL JONES, FRCP Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire

Sir: In Cornwall we had clear night skies over the weekend, enabling us to see the approaching comet Hyakutake with the naked eye: it was a fine sight. Comets were always viewed as bringers of disaster, and this one's arrival has coincided almost to the day with the BSE scare. N J LENNON Newquay, Cornwall

Sir: The Government encourages us both to disregard the low risk of contracting CJD and to accept the low chance of winning the Lottery. ROBERT PIGACHE Tunbridge Wells, Kent

Sir: The Student Loans Company has acknowledged and apologised for the problems which resulted from the introduction of a revised application procedure for loans in the autumn of 1994. Your report (22 March) fails to put these problems into perspective. The delays – whilst undeniably serious – affected a small proportion of students. The problems were short-lived: they were fully resolved by 15 January 1995. Around 95 per cent of students who applied for a loan in academic year 1994/95 had their applications dealt with in a timely fashion. The difficulties have now been fully overcome, following the introduction of an improved procedure for 1995/96. This followed the internal review to which you refer. COLIN WARD, Chief Executive Student Loans Company Ltd Glasgow

Sir: Your revelation (26 March) that the CIA supported violent opposition groups within Iraq echoes previous evidence of US support for Iranian rebels who have targeted civilians. Will John Major now condemn the US as he berated Iran last week for far more tenuous allegations? GLEN RANGWALA Trinity College Cambridge

Sir: The English Channel is a wonderful thing. In spite of hundreds of thousands of British cattle passing over the Channel over the past ten years, there is apparently no problem with BSE in France and elsewhere. What complete nonsense. We are now faced with major countries in the EU abandoning the UK to the potential economic catastrophe of mass cattle incineration while hypothetically ignoring the widespread unreported problem in France, Germany and elsewhere. The difference is that in the UK we fully compensate any farmer for a BSE victim (which is then destroyed) thereby encouraging the farmer to be

Sir: Professor Woodland's letter on Scrapie/BSE (23 March) states that "pasture remains infective for some years after [scrapie infected] sheep are removed."

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. (Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Churches fight social evils

Sir: Your obituary of civic Christianity (22 March) is premature. I have visited 26 cities in the last two years and can report that the churches are heavily engaged in helping the casualties of our rapidly deteriorating society. Everywhere I've been the Church Urban Fund, set up following Sir Richard O'Brien's *Faith in the City* report, is doing great work; but today we are also creating networks across the denominations, in which the new Community churches play a leading part, full of Christian love and enthusiasm and often more generous with funds and people than older churches.

For all this there is broad support. Two years ago I made the case for the city networks at seminars in seven of the five-day Spring-Harvest/Word Alive conferences. Since then, 11 cities have started networks and most of the rest are following, pooling our knowledge and experience across the country in dealing with among other things, homeless teenagers, drug addiction, battered wives, single mothers, debt, and helping the demotivated young to find jobs. I think that my predecessor, the great Earl of Shaftesbury, would have approved. Sir FRED CATHERWOOD President The Evangelical Alliance London SE11

Sir: Christian Socialism, you imply (leading article, 22 March), is doomed. Methodism, and Church attendance, is on the decline and the broad tradition into which Tony Blair has tapped

has "no social basis". Yet in the last two months nearly 2,000 new members have joined the Christian Socialist Movement. You allude to the old adage that the Labour Party owes more to Methodism than to Marx, yet the first Christian Socialists were Anglicans, not Methodists, and Roman Catholics in Britain, from Cardinal Manning and John Wheatley through to today, have been vital in outlining the parameters of a "civic Christianity".

Today, though many of the churches seem to have little energy for anything other than internal wrangles – it was worrying that not a single bishop chose to express a public view on the Scott report's criticisms of government practice – the number of Christian Socialists involved in public life is as high as ever. The political agenda for Christians of whatever denomination is clear at the moment: rescuing politics from the slough into which it has fallen, making education and the pursuit of truth a national passion and addressing the despair of grinding unemployment, homelessness, inequality and poverty at home and abroad.

As you rightly say, this depends on the acceptance of a basic moral code which values honesty and integrity and calls things "right" and "wrong". Otherwise we are left with Nigel Lawson's nihilistic dismissal: "There is nothing left to socialism but the moral high ground". There is a clear task for those who believe that politics is a moral endeavour. CHRIS BRYANT The Christian Socialist Movement London N1

Sir: I am most grateful to Anna Pavor for highlighting the plight of Downe Hall, Bridport (23 March).

In the past few days a knight in shining armour has been sighted on the horizon in the unlikely guise of English Heritage, previously part of the nothing-doing-nothing brigade. English Heritage, until last week deaf to all our appeals, has now reversed its policy towards Downe Hall and is starting to work out how to preserve the house and its gardens. It gives fresh hope to us all when a

national institution has the nerve and flexibility to change policy at a late stage. Let us hope that at the local level West Dorset District Council can show a similar responsiveness and that perhaps some Heritage Lottery money could help preserve intact for future generations this elegant house and gardens. CAROLINE SANDWICH (the Countess of Sandwich) Chairman Dorset Gardens Trust Beaminster, Dorset

English Heritage to the rescue

Sir: Why should a falling population after the year 2020 give the chancellor of the day a "feel-bad" problem? ("Feel-bad" factor predicted as population falls", 22 March). A slowly falling population would naturally lead to a disappearing housing shortage and falling costs, together with falling unemployment, reduced congestion, reduced pollution, and a falling import bill. The pressures of intensive farming on food quality and wildlife could more easily be reduced. It would become possible to stop gobbling up countryside in urban "development", and much more.

Most of these are benefits in any terms. Some appear as negatives only in the false accounting of conventional economics, which measures all exchange of money as a "good", even if the "good" is the medical care of road accident victims, or scraping oil off beaches. CHRISTOPHER PADLEY Green Party Population Policy Working Group Market Rasen, Lincolnshire

Sir: Your revelation (26 March) that the CIA supported violent opposition groups within Iraq echoes previous evidence of US support for Iranian rebels who have targeted civilians. Will John Major now condemn the US as he berated Iran last week for far more tenuous allegations? GLEN RANGWALA Trinity College Cambridge

Feeling good with fewer people

Sir: If further examples are needed to convince those who continue to believe the Irish were a backward people, I suggest they read Johannes Scopus, John the Scot. (In the ninth century "Scotus" means Irishman). The excellence of his translation work was remarked upon by Anastasius, the librarian of Pope Nicholas, in 860, who was astonished that a man from a remote and barbarous country could have possessed such a profound knowledge of Greek.

Throughout what we call the "dark ages" there is evidence that the knowledge of Greek and the Latin classics was kept alive by the Irish. "During the latter part of the seventh century, it was in Ireland that the thirst for knowledge was keepest, and the work of teaching was most actively carried on" (M R James).

TM CRAIG Oswestry, Shropshire

US terrorism

Sir: Your revelation (26 March) that the CIA supported violent opposition groups within Iraq echoes previous evidence of US support for Iranian rebels who have targeted civilians. Will John Major now condemn the US as he berated Iran last week for far more tenuous allegations? GLEN RANGWALA Trinity College Cambridge

Student loan delays sorted out

Sir: The Student Loans Company has acknowledged and apologised for the problems which resulted from the introduction of a revised application procedure for loans in the autumn of 1994. Your report (22 March) fails to put these problems into perspective. The delays – whilst undeniably serious – affected a small proportion of students. The problems were short-lived: they were fully resolved by 15 January 1995. Around 95 per cent of students who applied for a loan in academic year 1994/95 had their applications dealt with in a timely fashion. The difficulties have now been fully overcome, following the introduction of an improved procedure for 1995/96. This followed the internal review to which you refer. COLIN WARD, Chief Executive Student Loans Company Ltd Glasgow

Who's this Jakob, and where's the Beefy?

How much do you know about beef by now? Here's a small test, just to find out.

1. How well have you been following the debate on the beef crisis in the last few days?

a) Well.
b) Well, quite well.

c) Well. I'm a dairy farmer from Somerset and I don't believe there is a beef crisis, only a beef panic, and I've never had any BSE in my herd, well, I have, but I didn't tell anyone, and what I say is this...

2. How many of you have been misreading the headlines and thought there was an EU ban on British beef, and that JCD probably stood for "John Courage Disaster"?

3. What are the main symptoms of JCD?

a) An increasing inability to follow Stephen Dorrell's arguments.
b) A tendency to believe that there is a town in Germany called Beefburg.

c) A horrible feeling that the more you learn about beef the less you know?

4. How convinced are you of the link between BSE and Jakob Creutzfeldt Disease?

5. Who was this Jakob Creutzfeldt, anyway?

6. Why do people with German names get to discover all the most fas-



MILES KINGSTON

tionable diseases, like Alzheimer's?

7. And if Jakob Creutzfeldt was German, doesn't this mean that the almost certainly discovered disease is in Germany?

8. Which means that they must have BSE over there as well!

9. But they haven't been telling us about that, have they?

10. Oh, no – they haven't let on that they have got BSE over on the Continent as well, have they?

11. But then they wouldn't, would they?

12. It's always us poor Brits who follow the regulations and get caught, isn't it, not the continental who don't even test for BSE and if they do, never own up to having it!

13. All right, let's calm down a bit, shall we?

14. It has been established now, I think, that BSE was caused by the feed provided by the rendering

processes of the feed industry, which minced up diseased sheep to feed to cows, and that although this has now been stopped, we are living with the consequences of those days. Is that not so?

15. And the Government can claim that it was not to blame because it left the rendering industry to regulate itself?

16. (And, besides, the Scott report said the Government has always acted in good faith, did it not?)

17. And the farmers were not to blame because they accepted the feed in good faith from the rendering industry and didn't know what was in it?

18. Therefore, it must have been the feed industry which was to blame?

19. So can we expect a lot of lawsuits being taken out against the feed industry by farmers driven to the verge of bankruptcy?

20. And just in case this happens, has the feed industry been busy shredding its own evidence of complicity in BSE?

21. And converting these shredded documents into cattle feed?

22. Thus cleverly getting the incriminating evidence destroyed by the very animals it is accused of having affected?

23. But how do we know that mad cow disease might not be caused by

eating evidence of mad cow disease? 20. Oh, and by the way, if mad cow disease was originally caused by contamination from diseased sheep with scrapie, how come there have never been any scares about mad sheep disease?

21. Why has there never been a lamb crisis, even though there was mad sheep disease? Eh?

22. When you heard of British Airways' decision to ban British beef from in-flight meals, did you think to yourself: "As it's impossible to tell one kind of meat from another in airline meals, I don't really see the point of banning anything particular."

23. When you last picked up a jar of Bovril, did you wonder if there was such a thing as mad beef drink disease?

24. Have you stopped saying things like "yours, till the cows come home" and "beefing things up"?

25. Do you attribute Ian Botham's recent failure to get into cricketers' admin to his nickname of "Beefy"?

26. The next time someone brings up the question of why dinosaurs vanished from the earth, will it suddenly occur to you: "Of course – Mad Dinosaur Disease!"

All the answers to everything can be obtained from Mr Stephen Dorrell, Secretary of State for the National Health Lottery.

Why the state can't fix the family

Pushing single mothers into having their babies adopted is no solution to unplanned pregnancy.

The Government wants to encourage more single mothers to give their babies up for adoption. What a good idea!

Some 38,000 teenage girls and 50,000 non-cohabiting single women give birth every year at a cost to the state of £2bn in social security. Most single mothers are destined to live in the worst flats in the worst estates, without child care or a chance to work, their children's chances blighted from the start. (It is odd how the Government focuses on the inadequacies of single mothers when fathers are the ones who cause most of the trouble in problem families. When pressed on this point, they hasten to say that they mean any unplanned child with less than ideal parents.)

Meanwhile, thousands of childless couples queue in vain to adopt. Simple. Call in the social engineers, and it shouldn't take much spinnery-work to solve these two problems with one shot, sharp sword.

Tomorrow, the Department of Health publishes a draft Bill on adoption, together with a consultation document. Its officials could not frame a legal clause that would persuade unmarried mothers to give away their babies - in the old days it was done by shame and family threats. So instead, a circular has just been issued to local authorities and adoption agencies by the department, an authoritative misadventure just short of legislation.

The circular instructs social workers to promote adoption as a positively good solution instead of a last resort. Adoption continues to be an important service for children, offering a

positive and beneficial outcome for many. ... For many children it will be clear to social workers at an early stage that adoption is the only practical long-term solution likely to meet their particular needs.

Leaving aside low thoughts about the public exchequer, what ideas lie behind this eulogy for adoption? John Bows, the Health minister, explains: "We are trying to promote adoption as an acceptable and valid alternative to abortion and the burden of bringing up an unwanted child."

The idea was first widely mooted in the United States by Newt Gingrich and stolen, like so many, by John Redwood. Now, watered down, it has trickled into this new adoption legislation. How odd that the right's infatuation with genetic determinism (the poor are poor because they are genetically inferior), exemplified in the recent influential book *The Bell Curve*, allows them to admit that changing a child's environment will change its destiny - a liberal creed if ever there was one.

Encouraging adoption sits strangely in the right-wing canon since it involves state intervention in the most private of matters. The right, often correctly, thinks that the state is very bad at many things, such as running gas and electricity industries or managing housing estates. When it comes to taking responsibility for vulnerable children, it has scarcely improved since the days of Oliver Twist. Of the 51,000 children in its "care", 75 per cent will leave with no qualifications, one in seven girls will leave care pregnant or already with a baby, while 26 per cent of the prison population are care graduates. Hardly

a record to suggest that the state should intervene in a whole lot more families in order to do them similar good.

Of course, adoption is not the same: newborn babies nestled into carefully selected families do not suffer that fate. Some 21 per cent of adoptions do fail but mainly among children adopted at older ages. However, many more adopted children do develop behavioural problems, earning them disproportionate referrals to child guidance clinics. As adults, half of all adopted women and 30 per cent of men set off in search of their natural mothers, feeling that some part of themselves is missing.

In a book called *Lost Children*, I interviewed a great many adopted people who described a deep sense of dislocation. They spoke of looking in the mirror and wondering if anyone



POLLY TOYNEE

Adopted children lived with a dangerous dream of a lost, better family

elsewhere looked like them. They lived with a dangerous dream of a lost, better family and a perfect mother.

As for the wretched mothers forced by poverty and disgrace to part with their babies, the anguish lasts forever. They talk of gazing at everyone in the street of the right age, trying to recognise the child they abandoned.

Those are the very good reasons why the Government is wrong to promote adoption except in extremis. Yet a nagging doubt remains. When you see hopeless cycles of deprivation repeating themselves over and over again, why not take that child gently from the arms of inadequate parents, married or not, and rescue it from following in their footsteps? Even if that adopted child does grow up full of regrets, isn't that outweighed by the undoubted benefits? The child is automatically moved up the social ladder, brought up in a well-heeled family, to be well educated with every prospect of a good life ahead, so isn't that better?

Against that view is history. Such social engineering has led to untold misery, though it often looked like common sense at the time. Dr Barnardo's and the Government sent battalions of poor children abroad as "apprentices" to a "better life" in Canada and Australia, where they ended up as indentured servants. The mass evacuation of very young children in the war, without their mothers, "for their own good" is now regarded as a brutal error. Governments get these things wrong.

The Children Act planted in the law the idea that a child's interests are always paramount. But it turns out to be an ideal impossible to grasp, let

alone implement. Looking at most court decisions, it is apparent that we still regard children as the possessions of their biological parents. We do not know how else to treat parents' loud claims of ownership. This month, the Court of Appeal sent a 10-year-old Zulu boy who had lived in Malawi for four years back to his natural parents - to live in unaccustomed poverty, with no chance of an education - despite his passionate wish to stay in London with the only family he has ever known. His parents' demands for his return overruled all his own wishes, and it happens time and again in courts everywhere.

In the end, the argument against the Government's desire to take more children from their parents is not the emotional or Freudian one that says a baby is always better off at the breast of its biological mother. That is often self-evidently sentimental nonsense, since a great many parents are monstrous.

No, the reason why state-promoted adoption makes no sense is this: There are limits to what government can and should attempt to do. To step in and seize babies from undesirable, though not dangerous parents is beyond the remit of government and suggests that the state is responsible for ensuring that every child gets equal and optimal parenting.

Should government take the blame for every human failing, even for fate itself? Where would this quasi-eugenic thinking ever end? How oddly it sits in the spectrum of modern right-wing individualist ideas, when it so plainly belongs to the realms of socialism, or even national socialism.

comment

Could he be the auntie-pope?

Andrew Brown reviews the Archbishop of Canterbury's five turbulent years in office

Tomorrow is the fifth anniversary of the confirmation of the election of Dr George Carey as Archbishop of Canterbury. This is an almost meaningless formality which comes between the moment when the new Archbishop is actually chosen by the Prime Minister and his ceremonial enthronement weeks later. Still, Dr Carey thought it significant enough to use as a peg for a sermon this weekend: a proper regard for the dignity of this office is one of his most notable characteristics.

The first five years of his primacy have been extraordinarily challenging. The ordination of women has led to the loss of about 300 priests to Rome, and the emergence of Forward in Faith, a well-organised and vigorously led inner opposition which hopes to lead perhaps three times as many over: eventually, after the Church of England has broken up - a development his leaders think inevitable. The Church Commissioners had lost most of the £800m they blew on property speculation before he became primate, but the scandal engulfed in his primacy and the consequences remain for him to deal with.

Dr Carey has introduced a newly aggressive and confident note into the discussion of church matters, but the fact remains that an optimist in this context is one who is certain the long decline has finally bottomed out. The "decade of evangelism" launched with great excitement the year he took office, has fizzled out amid the grotesque embarrassments of the Nine O'Clock Service cult in Sheffield. The remainder of his term in office - and he could go on for another 10 years - holds the prospect of formal disestablishment, which will, humiliatingly, come as part of a wider constitutional reform and all the fun of the royal divorce and remarriage.

Most of these matters are outside the control of any archbishop. But Dr Carey has brought his own style to all of them. From the moment five years ago, even before the formal confirmation of his election, when he said that some opponents of women priests "were guilty of a very grave heresy", until his pronouncement that the Dunblane massacre showed the importance of absolute standards of right and wrong, he has been easy to characterise as loud, confident and wrong.

This made a welcome change from the previous stereotype of the Church of England as a body quiet, diffident and

wrong. But it has not helped him to be taken seriously except by committed followers. He told the United Nations he was a world spiritual leader, but this is not quite the same as being accepted as one. He has rushed around the world to Armenia, Bosnia, China and Sudan, quite undeterred by any local absence of Anglicans: the effort is not sinister, like an anti-pope, but slightly grotesque, like an auntie pope.

Provisionally, Dr Carey has the energy to make millions of mistakes and recover. He writes his own speeches, works very long hours and still keeps time for a programme of earnest reading. He is an effective dri-

ver of committees, and adept and determined at getting things done.

Perhaps the secret both of his success and of his limitations is found in a phrase used in the preface to the report of the Turnbull Commission, which is his blueprint for reforming the central structures of the Church of England. There he is called the "vicar to the nation", a title that seems to have been invented for the occasion. It fits. His model of authority is that of the admired vicar of a growing congregation, as he once was in Durham. He still treats the wider church as if it were his congregation. His sermons and lectures are meant to provide a programme of teaching. He expects quite normal people to accord him authority, because he is Archbishop.

This may provoke petulant sniggers among Catholics and secular intellectuals. It may also be just what is needed, as he leads the Church into still more difficult times. For if disestablishment comes, he has been there already. Dr Carey is the first Archbishop of Canterbury for centuries who not only was born outside the Establishment (on a council estate in Barking) but has never really been inside it. He has a deep understanding of the qualities that churches need to succeed in a hostile marketplace. If these turn out to be inimical to, or even incompatible with, the qualities that once made the Church of England loved, well, that is not his problem, or his fault.

BSE: big chance for Brussels

The European Union should use the beef crisis to win support in Britain, writes John Lichfield

BSE is infectious; it promotes an infectious incursion among politicians, officials and the media. The hysteria has now spread to Britain's relations with Europe, a sick relation if ever there was one. The European Commissioner for Agriculture, Franz Fischler, has exceeded his personal authority (but not the Commission's) in announcing a worldwide ban on British beef exports.

Informed commentators in this country profess surprise that the European Union has a right to regulate our trade with non-EU countries. How surprising that they should be surprised. This was something we surrendered not at Maastricht, not in the Single European Act, but when we joined the then EEC in 1973.

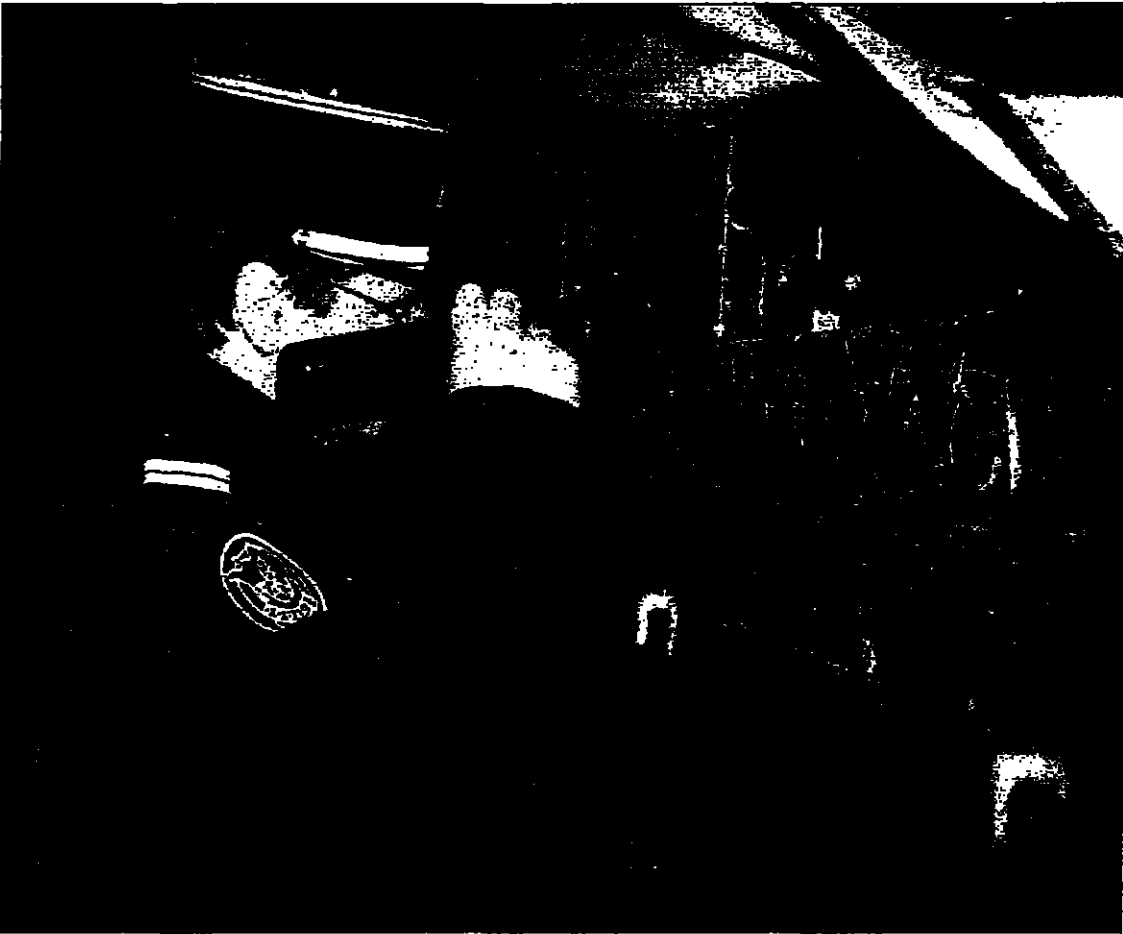
We have a right not just to be quarantined but to be helped towards recovery

The real issues of Europe and BSE lie elsewhere. There are at least three. First, Mr Fischler had no right to impose the ban, using his own authority or even that of the 14 senior vets from other member states who met in Brussels on Monday. The decision should properly have gone to today's meeting of the full Commission.

The second issue is whether there is sufficient medical evidence for such a ban. The whole scientific argument has become so obfuscated that it is impossible for a layman - or even a specialist - to give a sensible answer. Brussels was reacting not scientifically but politically. Most of the big beef-importing countries, such as the United States, banned our beef long ago. All EU countries save two have unilaterally followed suit in recent days. The worldwide ban - if confirmed - is there to distinguish between British and non-British beef. Its real aim is to shore up confidence in the global beef exports of other EU countries.

The third issue - and the most important - is what else Brussels plans to do. Agriculture, rightly or wrongly, is another policy area largely surrendered by member states to Brussels. There is a serious, potentially crippling, sickness in Europe's agricultural family. Even if the sickness is partly of our own making, we have a right, as members of the family, not just to be quarantined but to be helped towards recovery.

As things stand, the BSE row looks likely to spoil the launch in Turin on



Emergency measure: a customs official at Boulogne inspects British livestock

Photograph: AP

Friday of the rolling Inter-Governmental Conference on the future shape of the EU. The Turin summit was hardly shaping up to be a conspicuous success. One row, it seems, will blend seamlessly into the other. But such an outcome is not inevitable.

In all honesty, the EU has more right to be angry with the British government than does London with the EU. For six years or more, the European Commission and the other member states have fought a rearguard action to keep the Continental market open for British beef. All other leading importers - including our American and Australian friends and cousins - banned our meat at the slightest suspicion of a problem. The commission swallowed, and defended, the British line that a) BSE was not transferable to humans and b) everything possible had been done to prevent meat sold for human consumption from being exposed to the disease.

On the first point, scientists and the British government have changed their minds. On the second point, substantial evidence has emerged that too

little was done by the deregulation-obsessed Thatcher government in the late 1980s to fence off the infection from the human food chain.

It may be true, as British farmers say, that there is also a BSE problem lurking on the Continent. But many of the proven cases - including those found in Brittany this week - are traceable to British sources, largely because Brussels fought to protect the cross-Channel trade in live animals. Mr Fischler also complains that, even when the new scientific evidence began to emerge, Whitehall kept Brussels in the dark.

There is undoubtedly some *Euro-schadenfreude* here. Britain loves to lecture its partners on its scrupulous observation of the European rules and the superiority of our national standards to some Continental standards (take a bow, Michael Portillo). There is an element of grim delight in finding such a stick to beat Britain with - in the Turin summit week of all weeks.

This is human nature. But Europe - if it is serious about persuading Britain to join the club in spirit as well as in form - is in danger of missing an

important trick. BSE is shaping up as the greatest British political crisis for many years: a crisis of confidence in the whole apparatus of government. This should be an opportunity to suggest to the British people that membership of a European union provides comfort and solidarity, not just free trade and red passports.

The EU could help by subjecting the British government's latest scientific analysis and safeguards (ie, the claim that British beef is now safe) to a rigorous independent investigation, the results of which should be made public. That, in essence, is what Mr Fischler proposes. If he is then able to recommend a lifting of the embargo, he might have done more to restore international and domestic confidence in British beef (than a simple, unquestioning acceptance of the word of THIS government).

But we should expect more from Brussels. At some point, if UK beef prices continue to fall, our farmers will be eligible automatically for EU aid. What remains of the notorious intervention system - the guarantee to buy

up unwanted food if it falls below a certain price - will come into play. But intervention in beef is now much more limited than it used to be (partly, and quite rightly so, at British insistence). Standard EU subsidies will not save the beef industry from ruin and certainly will not restore its good name.

Some great propitiatory bonfire of older British cattle - however unsentimental - now seems to be demanded as the price of rebuilding consumer confidence. The Cabinet is balking at such a step because of the great cost involved (£1bn at the very minimum). This may, in turn, be because Brussels is reluctant to pay part of the bill.

Why? There is plenty of money sloshing around in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) budget.

It is a misconception that Brussels can simply dole out money to farmers in trouble

isn't there? No, and also yes.

It is a misconception that Brussels can simply dole out money to farmers in trouble. There has to be an agreed policy; there have to be available funds. The total amount available for animal disease eradication throughout Europe this year is £32m. The entire £11bn CAP budget for 1996 is under some pressure.

If does transpire, however, that Brussels expects CAP reforms and high world food prices to produce an enormous potential surplus - maybe £3bn - in the farm budget over the next three years. Arguments are already raging about the ownership of this cash. Brussels wants to spend some of it on large transport projects; Britain wants to give it back to the taxpayers (ie, to put the UK share towards its own tax cut and re-election fund).

Europe - not just Britain - faces an agricultural crisis. A special programme should be drawn up to help farmers to get rid of all European cattle over a certain age that could possibly have been exposed to BSE. Brussels should use the creative accountability for which it is famous to borrow the needed funds from the CAP surpluses expected in future years.

Yes, Britain and British farmers would benefit most. But we have paid faithfully into the CAP for 23 years, mostly for the benefit of Continental and Irish farmers. Instead of exchanging insults in Turin, the European Commission, Britain and its EU partners should seize this opportunity by the horns.

Will the guests be more likely to choose that product above others in future? Will they buy the author's book? As the screenwriter William Goldman once observed about the film business, "Nobody knows."

If Carol had wanted to guarantee sponsorship for her party, she should have approached a less familiar brand of gin. As it is, she and Sir Denis have been lucky that United Distillers felt embarrassed by the leaking of an insulting memorandum. But the whole episode has served to achieve that quintessential goal for any sponsor or author: to raise one's profile.

As I've contributed to the process too, in my own humble way, I'm looking forward to receiving my invitation to the bash from HarperCollins's publicity department. Mine's a large one.

Hospitality on the rocks

Carol Thatcher wants free drink. Christopher Silvester sympathises

vailed. Sponsorship of Carol's and Sir Denis's party is hardly likely to jeopardise the company's image. But why should authors be forced to suffer the humiliation of having to seek sponsorship for their launches?

Once upon a time, publishers were generous party hosts. A party to launch a book was the expectation of every non-fiction author, an engine of promotion that would generate a buzz. Now we have publishing conglomerates, dump-bins, discounting and sponsored launch parties. A publisher will make a contribution

towards the cost of a party and will handle such burdens as the printing of invitations, but beyond that it is up to the author to find a sure-footed path through the enterprise culture.

Almost three years ago, I held a launch party for my anthology *The Penguin Book of Interviews*, to which I blithely invited 900 guests. My publisher weighed in with its mite contribution of £250 and I managed to attract sponsors whose products would stimulate the most jaded of partygoers. We found a hotel that was willing to give over its dining room for the

evening at cost price and persuaded a camera company to act as the underwriting sponsor (paying for the hotel's staff costs and loss of dining trade). Then I found a large drinks company to provide an array of underexposed brands - a vodka, a malt whisky, a red wine, a range of soft-drink mixers. The final element in the line-up was an energetic new cheese supplier.

The benefits a drinks company will derive from sponsoring a publisher's launch are intangible. Equally intangible is what kind of benefit the author and publisher will derive from

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P&O's promises will not hold off snipers for long



As a long-term strategy, selling a sizeable chunk of the group's £2bn property portfolio to pay the dividend is hardly credible even if, in the short term, it avoids the ignominy of cutting the payout.

It is a measure of the success of the charm offensive launched yesterday by Lord Sterling that investors studiously ignored the apparent lack of substance in his proposals to restore P&O's fortunes. They focused instead on the fact that the company's saving grace, one of the FT-SE 100's highest dividend yields at 7.3 per cent, looks assured for the foreseeable future and the shares nudged duly higher.

It is hard to escape the view, however, that it will take more than yesterday's promises to persuade the City to rerate the shares. As a long-term strategy, selling a sizeable chunk of the group's £2bn property portfolio to pay the dividend is hardly credible even if, in the short term, it avoids the ignominy of cutting the payout.

Floating off Bovis Homes, while it gets rid of one of the most cash-hungry parts of the empire and conveniently sidelines a division with one of the lowest returns in the group, is also hardly a great strategic leap forward. Arguably in the run up to a widely expected housing recovery, P&O should be holding onto Bovis.

The group's problem is not that its spread of transport, shipping and property businesses are unusually badly run but that they operate in a range of lousy markets. During the 1980s Lord Sterling was bailed out by inflation; as he had been during the 1970s, with relentlessly rising property values providing the cash to invest heavily in the capital intensive cruise liner and ferries busi-

nesses. It is possible to argue that continuing to invest throughout the recession was the right long-term strategy, misunderstood by the short-sighted City, but with the real estate cash tap firmly shut it was never going to be a sustainable policy.

One of Lord Sterling's favourite charts at the moment shows how since he took the helm in 1983 the total return on P&O's shares broadly matched that of the market until little more than a year ago. That says something about the importance of dividend income to total investment performance, and rather more about the ability of statistics to tell any story you want them to.

As the chart on the opposite page shows, another way of looking at the same data is that P&O's shares, having outperformed the market by a huge amount in Lord Sterling's first two honeymoon years in charge, have steadily underperformed ever since. Yesterday's proposals will hold the snipers off for a while but, with a plausible break-up value in excess of £7 a share, it will take something more substantive than this to see off P&O's critics for good.

Labour will not stop Railtrack flotation

Most stock market pundits are a spineless lot. Even those prepared to forecast the index tend to avoid putting a date on it. The Labour Party may be about to try

the political equivalent, by leaving the date out of its promise to bring the railways back into public ownership. Within the next few days the party is planning to release a policy statement to be incorporated in the Railtrack prospectus next month.

The indications are that the wording will be tough, satisfying John Prescott, the hawkish deputy leader, but leaving the timing so vague that Gordon Brown, the shadow chancellor, will be able to dismiss the financial costs, thus reassuring the City about Labour's fiscal orthodoxy.

Labour will repeat its previous statement that Britain needs a publicly owned, publicly accountable railway, implying it will bring Railtrack back under public control, at some undefined date. It is also likely to propose abolition of the £2bn a year government subsidy to the 25 passenger train operating companies, and a re-routing of the money directly to Railtrack.

This is obviously going to be difficult, given the tight contracts under which train operating franchises have been sold. However, it might be possible. If track access charges are reduced by the amount the operating companies receive in subsidy, the financial effect would be neutral. But why bother? While seeking work, it is an easy figure for the Government to collect, but it has been undermined by the many changes in definition. The new Job Seekers' Allowance in April will be the latest in a long line of changes

and deciding at the appropriate time. It may knock a little off the sale price, but it will not stop the flotation.

These unemployment figures are a sham

To describe the unemployment statistics as a "fiddle on an orchestral scale", as Greville Janner, chairman of the House of Commons Select Committee did yesterday, is certainly a good line. His report on the same was, however, a rather more limp affair than the one produced by civil servants. The committee held back from calling decisively for a monthly unemployment number based on the Labour Force Survey. The Central Statistical Office made its own view rather clearer with a working paper recommending collecting the figures on this internationally accepted definition at an extra cost of £7.5m a year.

The Chancellor has now been told by three separate bodies that the headline figure, which measures the number of benefit claimants, is widely regarded as a sham, since it understates – probably quite substantially – those actually unemployed and seeking work. It is an easy figure for the Government to collect, but it has been undermined by the many changes in definition.

The new Job Seekers' Allowance in April will be the latest in a long line of changes

The lavish rewards of failure

When it comes to lavishly rewarding failure, the Dutch masters of Barings have managed to surpass their deep Calcutta superiority. By any measure, the financial package agreed with Andrew "Teflon" Tuckey is an affront.

It may be paltry compared with the rich rewards that he once believed were rightfully his. But this is the man who presided, as deputy chairman, over one of the most spectacular collapses the City has known. The Securities and Futures Authority, holding to strict legal procedures, cleared Tuckey of direct involvement in the management debacle that allowed the Barings disaster to happen. But there was no hiding their feeling that natural justice had not been seen to be done.

Now this "Retirement" at £2 with a pension of £120,000 a year, a £110,000 annual fee as a consultant, and the usual share of profits as bonus. Such are the rewards of failure. Ministers don't resign these days, so why should investment banking captains go down with their ship? But rest assured, ING Barings says his role has been substantially scaled down. Oh well, that's all right then.

Vodafone sales hit as Orange heads for market debut

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

Vodafone's level of net new subscribers has slumped to about 100,000 in the first quarter of the year from 180,000 in the same period in 1995. Numbers at Cellnet are also thought to have suffered as both companies feel the increasing competition from Orange, whose shares began trading on the stock market today at an expected top of the range price of 205p.

Vodafone has yet to publish figures for the quarter, but industry sources believe the market leader took on about 50,000

net new customers in both January and February and is expecting around 45,000 for March.

There is a view that the March pick-up is partly due to Vodafone's new range of consumer-oriented tariffs, which follow Orange's lead in offering a certain number of "free" call minutes for a given monthly charge. The company is also planning a major advertising and marketing campaign to fend off the threat from Orange and the other relative newcomer, One2One.

According to one City analyst, "Once Orange had built their

quasi-national network it was always going to start taking more market share. There is also the fact that the market is not growing as fast as it once was."

The slowdown was particularly marked in December, when the mobile market fell sharply from the record levels in December 1994. The drag on growth in the approach to Christmas marred the overall performance for 1995, which was the best year so far for the industry.

Cellnet is also thought to have suffered in the first part of this year from a very high level of people leaving its network. Many of these signed one-year contracts during the boom around the end of 1994 and are now free to break away.

The Orange flotation, in which 25 per cent of the company's shares are being sold, is likely to value the company at £2.45bn. The two existing shareholders, Hutchison Whampoa of Hong Kong and British Aerospace, will own 50.49 per cent and 22.92 per cent following the sale.

Institutional investors have subscribed for more than nine times the number of shares available and 50,000 small investors have applied for shares. There is likely to be some scaling back in allocations to private investors although this may be limited as Orange is thought to be keen to have customers also owning shares.

There is a view in the City that up to half the shares available to institutional investors could go to those in the US. The UK is expected to get the lion's share of the balance. The exact pricing and details of the allocations are due to be announced this morning, with dealings in the shares starting at 2.30pm. Some City analysts expect the price to jump to around £2.50 on opening.



Hamleys, owner of the famous London toy shop, has shrugged aside terrorist attacks in the capital and is seeing sales run ahead of last year. But chairman Howard Dyer warned that the impact of the return of terrorism was difficult to predict as he unveiled a 13 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £6.38m for the year to January. Sales rose 10 per cent in the Regent Street store, while concessions in House of Fraser stores were up 38 per cent. A final dividend of 5.4p raises the total 16 per cent to 8.1p.

He said Halifax, which is to convert to a bank next year, will concentrate on using its franchise in the mortgage market to build up personal savings. "This will be the fastest growing side of the business." At present, like all building societies, mortgage-related business accounts for around 95 per cent of Halifax's earnings.

The 1995 results were earned against a housing market characterised by weak demand and intense competition among lenders. Although Halifax maintained its position as Britain's largest lender with 19 per cent of net new business, this appeared to be slightly below its usual share.

Mr Foulds said there is increasing evidence of steady improvement in the housing market. The Halifax house price index has risen for seven successive months, and is expected to continue in March. Mike Blackburn, chief executive, said: "We are seeing the first year-on-year positive numbers and the reports from the estate agents are significantly improved. It is too soon to be throwing our caps in the air, but the signs are encouraging."

Mr Foulds was sceptical about the usefulness of further interest rate cuts for the housing market. "Mortgages are already at historically such low levels that I don't think another fall in base rates will help much. At best it would have a marginal effect."

Halifax, which merged with Leeds Building Society in August last year, said its members will vote on conversion in early 1997, probably February. If approved, flotation will be by the summer.

Mr Foulds said this lengthy process ensured that as many qualifying members as possible would have been with the society for over two years to benefit most from the free share distribution. There would be some 9 million shareholders.

Halifax said it was taking a £113m charge for costs associated with the Leeds merger.

IN BRIEF

• The trend of rapidly rising directors' pay continued yesterday with a 78 per cent increase for Stephen Maran, chief executive of Lloyds Abbey Life. He received £272,000, including a £124,000 performance bonus, compared with total earnings of £209,000 in 1994. This excludes pension contributions, which also rose from £81,000 to £98,000.

• Consumer confidence in the US declined a fraction in March, according to the monthly survey by the Conference Board. The index fell to 97.7 from 98 in February. Consumers remained apprehensive about jobs, despite the creation of 705,000 new jobs in February. The Conference Board said consumer attitudes were in "neutral territory".

• Richard Branson's Virgin Group has confirmed that it is considering a return to the music business just four years after selling its original label to Thorn EMI. A spokesman said Mr Branson had "spoken to a number of people in the industry" and decided to look more closely at it. A decision will be taken over the next six months. Virgin has already recruited Jeremy Pearce, managing director of Sony's European music licensing division. When Virgin sold its label to Thorn it signed a 35-month non-competition clause, which has now lapsed.

• Charter, the railway ties to welding products group, is ready to spend between £100m and £500m to add a new leg to the business. Jeffrey Herbert, chief executive, said it had looked at around 20 businesses over the past 12 months, two or three seriously, but none had met its criteria. Any new business must be industrial, have an international presence and lead the market in its sector. Charter said, "A corporate orphan, unloved and unwanted... lurking at the bottom of a massive Euro-conglomerate" would be ideal. Charter reported all its businesses were on target in the first two months of the year, as it announced that the acquisition of Esab in 1994 had sent profits soaring to £97.5m last year. Investment column, page 22

• Inchcape's insurance broker, Bain Hogg, is in negotiations with its 40 per cent-owned associate, Cécir of France, with a view to merging the two companies' non-domestic European business interests. The merged operations are likely to be run as a 50:50 joint venture, adding that the new company's first start-up operation could possibly be in Germany, where neither has a presence.

'Free' call offers lead to tangle of charges

Consumer groups have been increasingly concerned about the plethora of complex charging packages available from different mobile operators and the difficulty experienced by many customers in making the right choice for their needs, writes Mary Fagan.

The issue has been highlighted by the decision by Orange to complain to the Advertising Standards Authority over advertisements by Cellnet which the small operator regards as misleading.

Orange pioneered the concept of "free" minutes bundled with a given monthly charge but Cellnet and Vodafone are now taking a similar approach with digital consumer packages. Orange's charges start at £15 per month, including 15 minutes "free" airtime. Beyond that, customers pay 25p per minute at peak times or 12.5p off-peak, although the bill is calculated on a per second basis. At the top

of the range, the monthly fee is £100 for 540 free minutes with other calls charged at 14p per minute peak and 7p off-peak.

Vodafone's new packages for digital consumers start with a monthly fee of £22.50 including 50 minutes of "free" calls. Thereafter the charges are 30p per minute peak and 10p off-peak but calculated on a per-second basis. At the top end, the monthly fee of £37.50 includes 100 bundled minutes. Calls are then 20p per minute peak and 10p off-peak, based on per-second billing.

Cellnet will also adopt per-second billing for digital consumers from April and will introduce new tariff packages. They start with a monthly deal under which customers pay £7.50 but are then entitled to £12.50 worth of calls. They then pay 30p a minute peak and 10p off-peak. At the top end the monthly fee is £12.50 with £17.50 worth of free calls and then charges of 20p per minute peak and 10p off-peak.

Trade gap trebles but inward investment soars to record

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

The shortfall on the balance of payments more than trebled last year due to a disappointing performance in "invisible" trade. Doubled UK payments to the EU helped account for the weaker invisibles figure.

However, inward direct investment – and investments by UK companies overseas – set new records last year. Foreign direct investment reached £19bn, including acquisitions of UK companies. British direct investment overseas was £24bn. Separate figures confirmed

that the economy grew by a modest 0.5 per cent in the final quarter of 1995 but showed the balance of spending power shifted from companies to the personal sector. The savings rate returned to its highest level since mid-1993, while the company sector suffered its first financial deficit for nearly three years.

"There is a big transfer of money from the corporate sector to persons," said Leo Doyle, an economist at Kleinwort Benson. "It is concentrated on the wealth holders. If you are one of the lucky ones with shares and Tescos, you will be starting to spend."

He pointed to the rapid growth in spending on big ticket consumer durables – up 1.8 per cent in the fourth quarter – as evidence.

"The switch from corporate to persons suggests scope for higher consumption growth this year," said Kevin Darlington, an economist at brokers Hoare Govett. Financial markets have begun to focus on the caution about interest rates being expressed by economists.

A majority of the Treasury's panel of "wise people" think there is little scope for further cuts. Yesterday, Goldman Sachs economists, headed by "wise

man" Gavin Davies, said their leading indicator of inflation had risen for the fourth month running.

The balance of payments was in the red by £6.7bn last year, up from £2.1bn in 1994, although it narrowed slightly to £1.8bn in the final quarter. Visible trade was £11.6bn in deficit in 1995, slightly worse than the previous year.

The big deterioration was in the surplus on invisibles such as investment income and services. It fell from £8.8bn to £4.9bn. Earlier figures were revised substantially for the worse. The most important reason

was a rise in payments to the EU in December, with the end-year adjustment of payments for once going against the UK. It took the net British contribution to the EU from £2.1bn in 1994 to £4.2bn last year.

There was also a sharp deterioration in banks' net earnings on their overseas transactions. UK banks' payments overseas increased by more than £10bn to £43.9bn, while their receipts were up nearly £7bn to £39.7bn. Total net UK investment income fell to £8.6bn from £9.3bn.

Trade in services improved, however. The surplus climbed by nearly £1bn to £5.7bn, al-

though it slipped by £200m to £1.3bn in the final quarter. Business services reported a weak final quarter.

Analysts were not alarmed by the disappointing balance of payments figures because EU transfers can be very erratic. However, some were concerned about the beef scare. Adam Cole at James Capel said it could add £1.5bn to this year's shortfall.

The full national accounts released yesterday did not substantially change earlier estimates of growth last year. GDP grew 0.5 per cent in the final quarter, to a level 2.0 per cent higher than a year earlier.

However, the figure for consumer spending in the final quarter was revised down to 0.5 per cent from 0.7 per cent, while income growth was higher than expected. This took the savings rate up to 10.5 per cent.

On the other hand, company profits growth slowed to a year-on-year rate of only 3.5 per cent. Combined with a sharp rise in dividends, the company sector went £624m into the red.

The GDP deflator – the widest measure of prices in the economy – is now estimated to have risen by 0.5 per cent in the final quarter, compared with an earlier estimate of 0.1 per cent.

Lang takes Germans to task on single market

PETER RODGERS
Business Editor

Ian Lang, President of the Board Trade, yesterday chose a day when Britain was under siege from Europe over beef to attack Germany's record in implementing the single market.

Speaking to the German-British chamber of commerce in London, he said it was puzzling that Germany was second to bot-

tom in putting single market directives into national law.

He urged the Germans to speed up compliance with directives and to play a full part in making the single market effective.

He had heard that the German federal system gave rise to difficulty, "but it is up to capitals to take responsibility for implementing treaty obligations."

Mr Lang also attacked Ger-

many's decision in the council of ministers to vote against EU rules requiring notification when imports of goods from other member states were refused.

The rules were eventually agreed despite German opposition. He had been saddened by Germany's decision.

"I know the German government was worried that the system would be difficult to operate, particularly in Ger-

many's federal structure. Nevertheless we want to ensure that it does work well. It is for business's benefit."

If members observed the treaty and the case law of the European Court of Justice there should be few notifications, he added.

Mr Lang also criticised Germany for its failure to observe EU policy of mutual recognition of technical standards, which has

led to protests from the Department of Trade and Industry in a number of cases. The DTI said examples were UK exports of gas analysing and measuring equipment and of tyre pressure gauges, where the Germans had insisted on compliance with their own domestic standards.

"It is trade and shared trading conditions that cement the partnership between the member states. But there are also ar-

eads where I would hope for improved co-operation."

No member state had a perfect record, but Denmark has put 99 per cent of single market directives into its own law.

"Making the single market work as effectively as possible has to be a joint as well as an individual effort; just as bad regulation has to be fought domestically as well as in the European Union," he said.



Saddened: Ian Lang wants Germany to play its part

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business

Taylor Woodrow swims against construction tide

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Many construction companies boast about the strength of their international operations offsetting weakness at home. Taylor Woodrow is unusual, however, in generating more from work outside the UK than inside. In the last year its geographical spread paid off handsomely.

In the 12 months to December profits actually fell, from £50.8m to £46m, largely thanks to 1994's one-off profit from the sale of Eurotunnel units and an exceptional hit this time, which we already knew about, to cover the cost of restructuring the UK construction arm. At the underlying operating level, however, returns were 17 per cent higher as all areas except home-grown contracting improved.

Running against the prevailing tide in the industry, Taylor Woodrow has stuck by its federation of businesses, a grouping of activities which at first sight seems to make little sense. Why, for example, should the company continue to run a trading operation, peddling among other things janitorial supplies and video equipment, when its real expertise lies in property development, housebuilding and private finance construction work?

No one will complain, however, about the 32 per cent jump in profits from the Greenham trading arm from £4.7m to £6.2m. Sales were up

a healthy 16 per cent as organic expansion continued and the return on net assets employed of only £28.5m would be the envy of many.

It is a better performance than construction, which despite substantial increases in overseas activity only managed to break even before the one-off costs of redundancies announced at the half-way stage. Taylor Woodrow has real expertise in private finance work around the world, but it is little better than its peers at converting that into profits.

In housing, however, the wide spread of activities in Canada, California, Florida and Australia was a

real boon in the context of a still-stagnant market at home. An increase in housing profits from £2.1m to £23.4m was an impressive performance.

Taylor's shares have been among the sector's best performers so far this year, bouncing from a low of 100p last November to yesterday's 149p, an 8 per cent rise on the day as analysts pushed their forecasts between 10 and 15 per cent higher to

£60m. On that basis, the shares stand on a prospective price/earnings ratio of about 15. After a good run, the shares are about right.

Charter on track with Esab

Jeff Herbert, chief executive of Charter, has a problem on his hands. His 1994 deal to buy Esab, the world's biggest welding products group, was just too successful. Bought at the bottom of the cycle, that acquisition was perfectly timed. For an outlay of £445m, including debt, the business shipped in extremely healthy profits of £74.6m in 1995, its first full year with the group it now dominates.

The effect on Charter's results for the 12 months to December was magnified by Esab's partial contribution in 1994, when there was also a change of year end, but the Swedish group clearly had a large impact. Group pre-tax profits soared to £97.5m in the latest 12 months from £54.8m in the previous nine.

Mr Herbert and his team have

done everything they said they would. Rigorous management has helped lift like-for-like profits at Esab by 22 per cent and underlying margins have grown 2 percentage points, when the windfall benefits from a bonanza in Brazilian sales of welding rods at the end of 1994 are stripped out.

Meanwhile, Charter's remaining businesses, mainly the separately-quoted Cape building insulation group and Pandrol railtrack fastenings, have not been neglected. Cape has done well to shrug off the UK's building malaise to raise profits 29 per cent, while a \$5m (£3.5m) turnaround into the black at the US track maintenance operation helped push up returns from the rail equipment division by 56 per cent.

But the big question for Mr Herbert and his team is how to maintain the momentum. Last year, economic growth meant volumes rose between 8 and 15 per cent in Esab's businesses, pushing margins through the 10 per cent target. The harder task will be to hold that level through the cycle, as hoped. Further cost cutting, shifting more production to low cost areas and a push into the Far East

will help, but the test will be the next recession, admittedly some way off.

A bigger hurdle for Mr Herbert will be to repeat Esab. With gearing cut to an impressive 17 per cent from 91 per cent in 1994, he is ready to spend anywhere between £100m and £300m. Similar targets are being sought among European conglomerates but the market waited for Esab and Mr Herbert is not about to be rushed.

In the meantime, profits of £108m this year would put the shares, up 14p to 89p, on a forward p/e of 12. Undervalued.

Iceland needs new direction

It is becoming increasingly clear that Iceland, the frozen food retailer, is in need of a new direction. Its role as a "top up" shop in the cut-throat supermarket sector just isn't providing the returns.

Hence last year's failed bid to buy the Littlewoods stores, which indicated a lack of confidence in the existing business.

Chief executive Malcolm Walker confirmed those suspicions yesterday when he hinted that although no acquisitions are on the horizon he would still like to do a deal.

The problem is that the market

doesn't believe there is any real upside here. The shares trade on a heavily discounted price/earnings ratio of 10 but there is still no interest. If the share price does drift up from its current 155p to around 170p they are likely to be hit by heavy selling.

All this is hard on the management, which is doing all the right things but running to stand still.

The dismal 3.5 per cent fall in like-for-like sales in the first nine weeks of the second half has been reversed and comparative sales have risen by 2 per cent in the 17 weeks since January. Margins have also improved.

Iceland is also reining back its store opening programme and will now open 40 new stores during the year. This compares with a recent annual average of 50.

Last year's results were decent in a difficult market. Pre-tax profits in the year to December were 3.4 per cent higher at £72.6m. Sales were flat at £1.4bn.

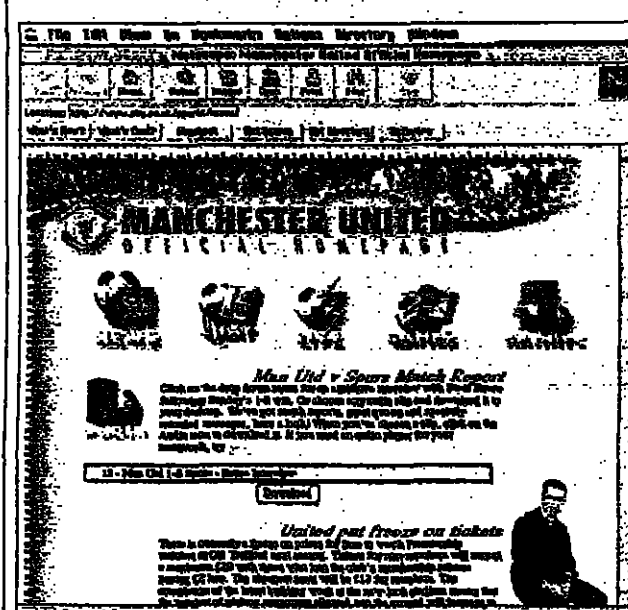
With £34m net cash, a share buy back is possible but this is unlikely to excite the market. Analysts have trimmed their profit forecasts for the current year to around £76m.

With sluggish earnings growth prospects and price competition in the supermarket sector set to put more pressure on margins, the shares have few attractions.

CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK

United's anoraks find the back of the Internet



And Cantona finds cyberspace up the middle: What a site - Manchester United's screen image

Manchester United has the 17th most popular web site on the whole of the Internet. Success on the pitch and in the City has now been followed by success in cyberspace. Announcing half-year results yesterday United said that since launching its own site on the World Wide Web last December (ask an anorak what this bit means) it has had more than a million visits.

Apparently the site itself is vast, with loads of detail about players, plans for the club and so on. It also has a "Chat Forum" for fans to communicate through, which has clocked up more than 7,000 messages. One company, Internet Direct, is so impressed that United has been nominated for its "Yell Awards" for "Best site on the Internet." Talk about planting the ball in the back of the net. If you're a fan and have nothing better to do with your life, here's the address: <http://www.sky.co.uk/sports/manu>

Peter Hyde, the head of UK research at Kleinwort Benson, has been poached by BZW to head its transport team. Mr Hyde was the top-ranked analyst in the Etsel survey in 1993 over all sectors, and also won accolades as an analyst in the water sector from 1989 to 1995. BZW thrilled yesterday: "We're delighted. It's a feather in our cap."

Since Mr Hyde will be swapping the central location of Kleinwort's Fenchurch Street offices for BZW's new ones miles away in Canary Wharf, Mr Hyde must have

been paid an even heftier transfer fee than usual.

Sir Nicholas Goodison, the former chairman of TSB and now deputy chairman of the Lloyds TSB Group, is not happy about the future of the modern art collection built up by the TSB before it was gobbled up by the black horse. Sir Nicholas fully accepts that the pictures and sculpture from more than 40 young British artists must move from the TSB's old head office at 60 Lombard Street, which will close once the merger is completed. But he is determined not to move the collection just along the road to 71 Lombard Street, Lloyds Bank's head office - because of the ghastly yellow lino-like floor covering which predominates on the fourth floor, where the top executives hang out.

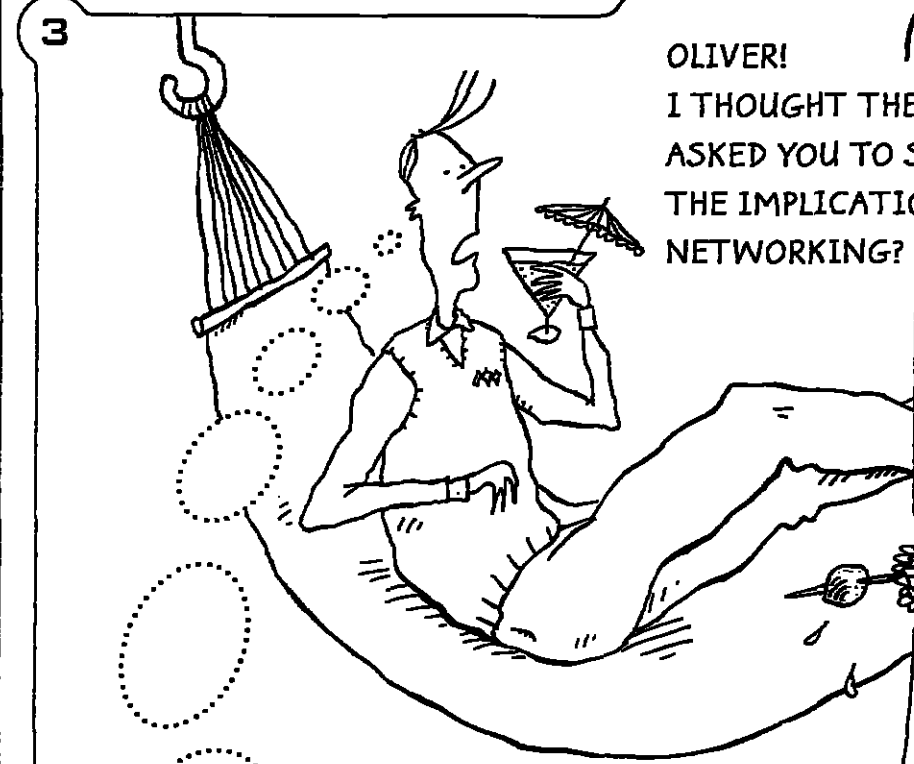
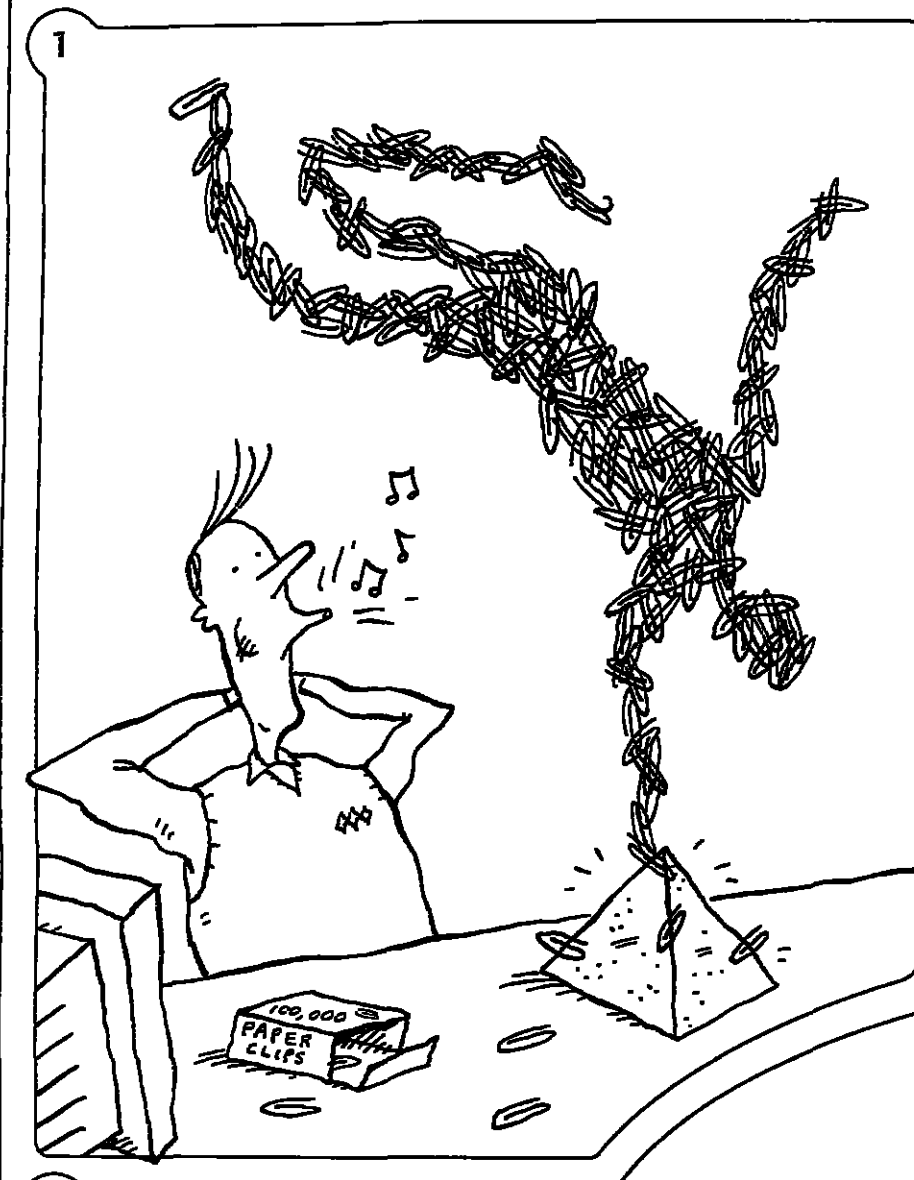
There's no way of getting rid of the yellow stuff either. It's got a preservation order on it; something about "art deco."

Greg Dyke, chief executive of Pearson Television, was at a dinner party given by Barry Cox, president of the FTV Association, a number of years ago. Mr Dyke was talking to a young man who had just been elected as a Labour MP and asked him why he had wanted to go into Parliament. "To make a difference," was the gist of the man's reply. Mr Dyke then declared: "The Labour Party needs people like you like it needs a ****ing hole in the head." The young man, of course, was Tony Blair.

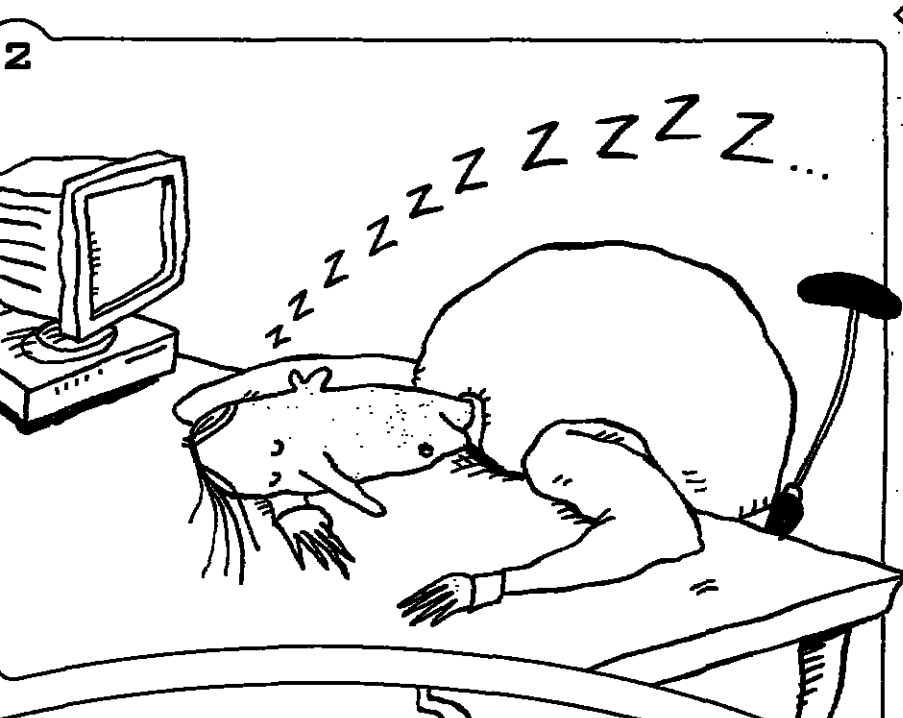
COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Darr & Wallace (F)	250m (281m)	4.6m (5.8m)	20.8p (22.2p)	7.1p (7.1p)
Canal (F)	408m (450m)	24.1m (18.2m)	5.47p (4.54p)	4.75p (3.75p)
Charter (M)	1.13bn (927m)	97.5m (94.8m)	67.5p (68.4p)	27.5p (1.0p)
Handyside (F)	30.1m (26.2m)	6.4m (5.65m)	19.3p (21.2p)	8.1p (7p)
Iceland Group (F)	1.57bn (1.26bn)	72.8m (70.2m)	17.0p (16.7p)	5.25p (4.2p)
Lloyd Thompsons (F)	23.1m (21.3m)	10.4m (8.1m)	8.21p (7.6p)	3p (2.75p)
Manchester United (F)	29.9m (26.4m)	15.3m (7.2m)	18.3p (8.5p)	7.5p (1.4p)
Maggill (F)	358m (345m)	-21.5m (14.8m)	-13.4p (4.2p)	3.85p (3.85p)
PSO (F)	6.57bn (5.95bn)	320m (250m)	37.6p (35.5p)	30.5p (20.5p)
Taylor Woodrow (F)	1.18bn (1.14bn)	46.0m (50.8m)	7.2p (7.8p)	3p (2.5p)
UnitChem (F)	1.43bn (1.32bn)	48.4m (44.4m)	16.3p (15.8p)	5p (7.15p)
Wolfschulte Risk (F)	75.8m (65.9m)	8.12m (7.53m)	65p (62.4p)	24p (20.7p)

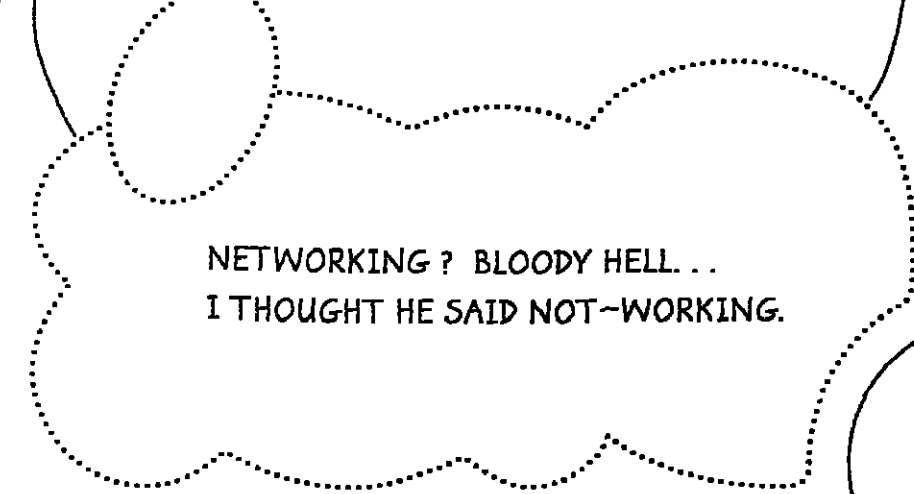
(F) - Final (M) - Interim (N) - Nine months



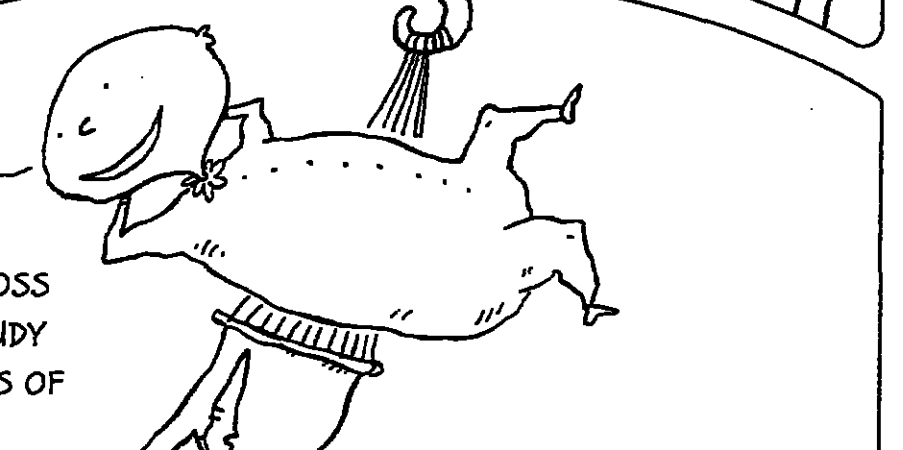
OLIVER!
I THOUGHT THE BOSS
ASKED YOU TO STUDY
THE IMPLICATIONS OF
NETWORKING?



MERCURY CAN SHOW
YOU HOW THEIR
NETWORKING SOLUTIONS
CAN LINK YOU TO PEOPLE
ALL OVER THE WORLD.
THEY'RE WORTH FINDING
OUT ABOUT.



NETWORKING? BLOODY HELL...
I THOUGHT HE SAID NOT-WORKING.



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When mankind meets machine, Mercury can help.

In the effort to turn Newcastle into a First Division club, Rob Andrew is assembling a veritable United Nations of rugby

Just before the England-Ireland match, Dick Best wrote that if the Irish selectors were to behave rationally, they would hold their training sessions at London Irish rather than in Dublin. He didn't meet the London Irish club, but he would have been surprised to find that the club would have a disproportionate number of players in the national side, but that more of them would be playing in the Courage First Division - and so it would be easier for all concerned to meet at Sumbury rather than across the Irish Sea.

That is clearly the way things are going, as much for Scottish and Welsh players as for Irish. In the effort to turn Newcastle into a First Division club, Rob Andrew is assembling a veritable United Nations of rugby. Northampton have playing for them, in the backs, not only Jonathan Bell

of Ireland but Gregor Townsend and Michael Dods of Scotland, together with Craig Mori, who is qualified for Wales. Arwel Thomas, the Welsh outside-half until Neil Jenkins made his reappearance, plays for Bristol. Keith Wood, of Ireland, who was considered the best young hooker in the world until he was suddenly dropped, is off to Harlequins along with Gareth Llewellyn of Wales. Wasps have hired Glyn Llewellyn also from Neath, who won nine Welsh caps in 1990-91, and Matthew Lewis from Bridgend, who may - who knows? - win many Welsh caps in the future.

However, if Lewis and others like him are to receive fair play, the Welsh selectors will have to change their traditional attitude. There are signs of such a change in the initial choice of

Bristol's Thomas. But in the past, Welsh players who were turning out for English clubs were virtually ignored unless they were appearing for a university, hospital or service side or, of course, for London Welsh. Indeed, there used to be an understanding, or so it was said, that if a player was able to appear for London Welsh but chose some other English club instead, he would be ignored by the Welsh selectors. If this was the case, incidentally, I fail to see how Geoff Windsor-Lewis of Richmond could have won two caps in 1960.

Jeff Young played not only for Harrogate but also for London Welsh and the RAF - and anyway his uncle was a selector. Ron Jones turned out briefly for Coventry, while Dai Davies played solely for the



ALAN WATKINS

Somerset Police, as John Robins did for Birkenhead Park. Before the war, Claude Davey and Wilfred Woollier both appeared for Sale, though they were more strongly associated in the public mind with their Welsh clubs, respectively Swansea and Cardiff.

The Scots, by contrast, have a more cosmopolitan attitude. Hamish Keith of Wasps and Micky Grant of Harlequins went unpunished for not playing for London Scottish. So I could go on, but it would be tedious. The Welsh have always thought that the only clubs worthy of serious consideration were Cardiff, Llanelli, Newport and Swansea, with one or two others enjoying periods of intermittent prosperity. The Scots have been prepared to cast their net more widely. The Irish, separated by the sea and by a selection system which seems to consist of a perpetual series of inter-provincial trial matches, have been more like the Welsh, though quite without the Welsh's conceit.

That conceit is, after the buffering of the past decade, a poor, bedrag-

gled thing, which is mostly to the good. In the past the danger to Welsh rugby was the northern league. The Courage First Division is now set to replace the league. The professionalisation of rugby union means that the players will go where the money is. And most of the money is in England - though few of us would have predicted that Saracens would turn out to be better heeled than Wasps, or Newcastle than Bath.

There is, however, one important difference. If Scott Gibbs or Richard Webster went north, he was lost to rugby union. When Gareth Llewellyn goes to Harlequins, he will still be available for selection for the Welsh team. The Welsh Rugby Union foolishly tried to prevent him from going to The Stoop on a technicality.

But it now seems to have relinquished the attempt. It would almost certainly have come to grief in one or other of the European Courts.

Likewise, the Rugby Football Union would be wise to give up completely its attempt to limit the number of those labelled "overseas" players in the First Division. I think it probably has done so. The tide of commercialism has already overflown petty English nationalism. This is all to the good too. Club power is fine. But I do not want to see British Isles rugby in the position where countries are dictated to by clubs over the composition - and the training periods - of the national sides. In other words, I do not want to see rugby go the way of football.

Broncos seeking instant response

"We are going to have to get some signs up here," said Barry Maranta, surveying the streets of Charlton. "You get directions to a Russian submarine, but not to our ground."

It would indeed, as the chairman of London Broncos indicated, be easier for a stranger to find the submersible moored nearby on the Thames than The Valley. The Broncos signs will go up, but it is the first few weeks of the Super League season, which begins this weekend, that will be the pointer to whether the capital's rugby league club will sink or swim.

London, upon whose ability to survive and thrive much of the credibility of Super League rests, begin their campaign with a demanding trip to Halifax on Sunday, before starting their home programme against the other great imperishables of the new competition, Paris, next Thursday.

By then, the game as a whole will have a much better idea of the Broncos' potential. Maranta is unequivocal about the make-or-buy nature of it all. "If it doesn't work now, it never will," he said.

No club has welcomed summer rugby more enthusiastically than London. Indeed, according to the affidavit that the European Super League chief executive, Maurice Lindsay, tabled in Sydney recently, the club was unlikely to have carried on if that revolution had not come to pass.

In the summer, they firmly believe, they will attract bigger crowds than they have so far lured to The Valley, not merely for a match but for an afternoon of entertainment, but they will first have to break down the psychological barrier that separates them from large numbers of potential supporters in south-east London.

It might be only 20 minutes from Charing Cross, but it might as well be on another planet in the minds of many Londoners. "Once we get people here, they will come back

Dave Hadfield follows the signs to rugby's Super League which gets under way this weekend

The game has a very high conversion rate," Maranta said.

In order to convert enough people finally to make rugby league in London a commercial success, however, the Broncos must both entertain and win. Last season, it would have been a harsh critic who called their matches dull, but the Broncos finished on the wrong side of high-scoring contests on too many occasions. This time, a new Australian coach, Tony Currie, hopes to retain the spectacle while adding some steel.

"I'm not rethinking the priority that is placed on entertainment," said Currie, a top-class centre with Queensland, Australia and - for two seasons - Leeds in his playing days. "But I'm stressing that for 50 per cent of the time, when you haven't got the ball, the game is about defending. In the past, the Broncos have sometimes got lazy over that."

"But we will still throw the ball around," he said, casting an eye over the broad acres of what was once the biggest club football ground in England. "End to end and sideline to sideline."

The tougher streak that the Broncos need alongside that commitment to expansive rugby is epitomised by the club's major new signing, the powerful and punishing prop forward, Gavin Allen. He is earmarked as the enforcer that the side has lacked and younger forwards, like Tony Mestrov and Darren Shaw, are already relishing the prospect of playing with him.

Allen, a force in Queensland's State of Origin series victory last season, will make his competitive debut for the Broncos at Thurin Hall on Saturday evening, along with three other new Australian recruits: Greg Barwick, John Minto and Tullio Tullitt.

The player the Broncos have chosen to spotlight this week, however, is the one Englishman in their opening match line-up, Junior Paul, a winger from nearby Blackheath, who turned up to pre-season trials last year.

Paul played one match for the Broncos' first team in the winter season, a self-confessed nightmare against Sheffield, but London have shown faith in him, both for his own potential and for his symbolic importance as a precursor of the club's long-term strategy.

"There are thousands of potential players out there," said the Broncos' chief executive, Robbie Moore, of the metropolis the club must try to woo. "Junior now has the benefit of having worked with the team and feeling much more a part of it. He knows now he will get all the help he needs."

Paul, a quietly-spoken 24-year-old, squirming slightly under the pressure of others' expectations, is a willing learner. "I tend to listen to anything anyone at the club tells me," he said. "I've only been in the game a year and they have been in it since they were kids."

The Broncos' reserve side won promotion in the Alliance League last season and they launch an Under-19 Academy side this time, mainly composed of young Londoners, leavened with a couple of scholarship players from Australia.

But it is on the performances of the big boys - very big boys, in Allen's case - that the viability of the Broncos and of Super League as a whole hinges. They have much going for them, not least landlords at The Valley with experience of exile themselves who are solidly behind the enterprise. But the coming months will determine whether the club is ever to reach the heights to which it aspires.

Gallacher turns on his old style



Family affair: Bernard Gallacher, who captained Europe to Ryder Cup success last year, and his son, Jamie, head for victory in their first-round match at the Sunningdale foursomes yesterday. They beat Ken and Jamie Ferrie at the first extra hole. Photograph: Adam Scott

Graf takes care of business on and off court

Tennis
JOHN ROBERTS
reports from Key Biscayne

Steffi Graf's ability to unburden herself on the court has never been more crucial as she prepares for the demands of the summer season while her father-manager remains in prison, awaiting trial accused of tax evasion on her millions.

Peter Graf's predicament appears to have had a fatalistic effect on the Wimbledon champion. "I'm not afraid of anything anymore, including death," she said this week in an interview with the *New York Times*.

The question of mortality was broached after mention was made of Graf's boyfriend, Michael Bartels, a German racing driver. "You can't stop someone from doing what they care about," she said. "But I knew Ayrton Senna a little bit, and what bothers me is that a year after somebody dies it's like they're forgotten, like they were never there at all. That to me is scarier than dying, that people care that way."

Her relief to be playing - and comparatively pain-free at present - has been intensified by the need to involve herself in complex business issues in her father's absence.

"I don't enjoy business," she said, "but this whole thing made me learn a lot about people. The way they think. I never had to deal with this type of people before because my father kept them away from me, but I got the picture very quick. It's been an awakening, and not the usual kind."

"It's been interesting but depressing. I'm glad I never had to deal with these people before. I spent the start of the year talking to investigators, choosing lawyers, caring about book-keeping and kind of taking responsibility from A to Z for what's happening to my father."

"I think I've been dealing with a group of people who care

about money, image and ego only - even the ones I'm paying. This man [her father] is in jail, and the only people around him are lawyers and the other 23 hours he's by himself. It's very hard on our family, and if this is business, I don't like business."

"I want to see what I'm going to do with the rest of my life now. But outside of my tennis, it's all kind of a mystery. And with all the problems I'm always having, tennis is still a challenge."

That is a business she appreciates. Her form in defeating Mary Joe Fernandez, 6-1, 6-0, in the fourth round of the Lipton Championships here was so outstanding that after the players had split the opening two games the match became a showcase of Graf's skills.

"It was all her out there," the ninth-seeded Fernandez said. "She had answers for everything I was throwing at her." The American is accustomed to losing to Graf, as their head-to-head of 14-0 shows. Occasionally, Fernandez has created opportunities to win. Sometimes she has frozen in the daze of the German's shot-making. Here, she must have wondered why she had bothered to turn up.

Graf declared herself to be "astonished" by her performance. "I felt I could hit whatever I felt I wanted to do. I could have kept on going."

The reverse was true of Graf's compatriot, the third-seeded Anke Huber, who was flattened in the quarter-finals by the tall American No 8 seed, Lindsay Davenport, 6-0, 6-4.

"I've had a really good last couple of weeks," said Davenport, who pushed Graf hard in the semi-finals of the recent event at Indian Wells, California, before losing, 6-7, 6-4, 6-4.

"I didn't have chance to find my rhythm," said Huber, who was the runner-up to Monica Seles at the Australian Open. "She put too much pressure on me from the first ball. Everything was going in."

SPORTING DIGEST

Baseball

World long jump champion Pat Pedraza, a leading gold medal hope for Cuba in the summer Olympic Games in Atlanta, underwent surgery on Monday for a torn knee, leaving him only a short time to get back to top form for the Games. He is back in a plaster cast for a month.

Baseball

ENGLAND SQUAD (European Championships): England, 14-24 April. Match 1: England (W) vs. Ireland (L). Match 2: England (W) vs. Scotland (L). Match 3: England (W) vs. Wales (L). Match 4: England (W) vs. France (L). Match 5: England (W) vs. Germany (L). Match 6: England (W) vs. Spain (L). Match 7: England (W) vs. Italy (L). Match 8: England (W) vs. Greece (L). Match 9: England (W) vs. Turkey (L). Match 10: England (W) vs. Czech Republic (L). Match 11: England (W) vs. Slovakia (L). Match 12: England (W) vs. Hungary (L). Match 13: England (W) vs. Poland (L). Match 14: England (W) vs. Romania (L). Match 15: England (W) vs. Bulgaria (L). Match 16: England (W) vs. Portugal (L). Match 17: England (W) vs. Netherlands (L). Match 18: England (W) vs. Belgium (L). Match 19: England (W) vs. Austria (L). Match 20: England (W) vs. Switzerland (L). Match 21: England (W) vs. Sweden (L). Match 22: England (W) vs. Norway (L). Match 23: England (W) vs. Denmark (L). Match 24: England (W) vs. Finland (L). 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SPORT

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Lloyd in line as Illingworth stands down

Cricket

DAVID LLEWELLYN

Five days of confusion over the future direction of the England cricket team ended at Lord's yesterday with Ray Illingworth standing down as team manager and the game's authorities looking for a new coach for the national side. Illingworth is to continue as chairman of selectors, with David Lloyd of Lancashire the favourite to work alongside him as coach.

Following last week's confusion, when Illingworth's only rival for re-election as chairman of selectors, David Graveney, was forced to pull out of the contest under pressure from his employers at the Professional Cricketers' Association, the situation degenerated into farce even before the Test and County Cricket Board's 10-man executive had assembled at Lord's to discuss England's bleak winter.

Illingworth had chosen to pre-empt some of the debate by announcing in a national newspaper that he was standing down as England team manager, while remaining as chairman of selectors.

The TCCB claimed it knew nothing of this decision and only late in the day did it acknowledge Illingworth's new role, and the consequent vacancy it created, by announcing: "The executive committee have decided they will appoint a coach, not manager, for

the duration of this summer only. An announcement will be made in due course."

The TCCB is therefore apparently willing to return to a structure which had previously been considered inappropriate. Illingworth had always maintained that there was room for only one at the top, and to this end Keith Fletcher was ditched as manager to allow Illingworth to take on his two roles.

No names were being mentioned officially last night, although there can only be a handful of candidates: David Lloyd, Phil Neale, John Emburey and, as an outside bet, Ian Botham. Of those, Lloyd would appear to be the favourite. He said in a radio interview yesterday: "Everybody, I think, is ambitious. And everybody wants to further themselves, to better themselves. If anybody at international level perhaps says: 'We'd like you to do this, you'd think seriously about it'."

Lloyd added: "It's nice to be linked with such an important job but at the moment I am the Lancashire coach only."

Illingworth will continue as chairman of selectors until the end of the 1996 season. Having insisted that he is the dressing room type, the ingredients are there for a clash of wills. It is also unclear what will happen to the specialist coaches, John Edrich and Peter Lever.

The TCCB also announced that the selection panel will comprise Illingworth, two elected se-

lectors and, when appointed, the team coach and captain. Papers went out to the counties last night for nominations for the two selectors. The selection panel will be responsible for the selection of the England team for the six Cornhill Tests (three each against India and Pakistan) and the six Texaco Trophy one-day internationals, as well as the winter touring parties. After that, their responsibilities cease.

It is expected that it will take at least a fortnight before the result of the ballot for the selectors will be known. However, a TCCB source indicated that the question of the coach's position would have to be settled before Easter. The season begins on 15 April and the first Texaco Trophy match is on 23 May.

Mike Soper, the Surrey chairman, said last night: "I'm just sad it's dragging on, but if they come out with the right result, then fair enough. My only concern is for English cricket. I just want this to be sorted out as quickly as possible for the sake of the game."

Whatever appointments for this summer are made, it seems certain that there will be further changes later in the year. The TCCB said yesterday that the working party under David Acland "will be making their recommendations to the Board meeting in August with regard to the long-term administration, selection and management of England teams". More time for more things to go wrong?



Paul Ince trains at Bisham Abbey yesterday as he relishes his England recall for tonight's game at Wembley

Photograph: Steve Morritt/Emics

Venables has faith in Ferdinand

GLENN MOORE

Football Correspondent

The irony was not lost on Les Ferdinand. Having been largely ignored by Terry Venables when he was scoring without pause for Newcastle, he has been chosen as soon as the goals have dried up.

Surely some mistake? No, once Alan Shearer was ruled out with a groin injury Venables had little choice. To pass over Ferdinand, after one start in nine squad appearances, and play his new recruit Robbie Fowler would have been a snub too far. He would have lost the player for good.


Ferdinand will play at centre-forward for England against Bulgaria at Wembley tonight. Although he partnered Shearer in the last international, it is the first time he has filled the No 9 shirt for Venables.

Teddy Sheringham returns to support him while Steve McMahon and, after a year's absence, Paul Ince, are recalled. The other change from December's 1-1 draw with Portugal is Gareth Southgate, who makes his first international start in place of the injured Tony Adams. David Platt has been

left out - Stuart Pearce is tonight's captain.

Venables, who rarely confirms substitutes before match-day, said Fowler would be on the bench. "When you come on as sub, it is nice to score to prove you should have been on from the start," Fowler said.

Ferdinand said he had "started to think the fact I was not scoring goals for Newcastle might affect my England prospects". With one goal in five games for Newcastle, he may find being away from the title race helps his goal touch. "It might be nice to get away from it. It is a very intense situation," he added.

			
ENGLAND			
<i>v Bulgaria</i>			
at Wembley tonight, Kick-off 8pm			
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ARSENAL			
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GOALKEEPER	DEFENDERS	MIDFIELDERS	FORWARDS
STEELE	GOUGH	FERDINAND	GOUGH
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STEELE	GOUGH	FERDINAND	GOUGH

It will certainly be a relief to be partnered by Sheringham, rather than the unpredictable Faustino Asprilla. "You can't blame it all on him," Ferdinand said, "but he does play in a different way. He has a wealth of talent but it is difficult to read, you never know what he is going to do next. That he does not speak the language does not help."

Paul Ince would sympathise. Yesterday he said communication problems had hindered his start in Italy. They still cause problems: his latest sending-off for Internazionale on Sunday, came after he disputed a yellow card wrongly given for "diving". His subsequent failure to leave the field for three minutes could result in a long ban, making a good performance tonight all the more important.

Ince, who last played in the abandoned game in Dublin, said: "It has been a long year. Although I am a strong character I wondered, at the back of my mind, if I was going to get back in. It was getting close to the summer, he had a settled squad. I was not sure what was going to happen. I had to start playing well at Inter, and I have. The difference was the arrival of Roy Hodgson as manager. If he had not come I would

not be at Inter now. He has got the whole team working."

"I knew I was good enough. It was a case of adjusting to Italian life. It is never easy, whatever job you do, to live in a new country," Ince said he nearly returned to England in the autumn but Massimo Moratti, the president who went out on a limb to buy him, persuaded him to remain for the season.

Moratti's persuasive powers may be tested again on Friday, when Ince tells him if he will stay for two more years, or exercise his escape clause. His wife, Claire, and son, Thomas, have not settled as well as the player. "Things like Sunday's sending-off do not help," Ince said, "but it is not just a football decision."

Ince partners Paul Gascoigne for the first time since Venables' opening match two years ago. "If we can get we have a chance to build up a partnership," Ince said. If they do it could be the beginning of the end for David Platt, who took his omission with typical equanimity. While his experience means he will not

be discarded, he may not regain his former prominence.

Venables emphasised that Ince and Gascoigne would have to be disciplined in midfield as Bulgaria are excellent on the counter-attack. This may tax Gascoigne, who is inclined to chase the ball, but failure to do so would expose a central defence with less than five hours' international experience between them.

"Bulgaria are as potent an attacking force as there will be in the tournament," Venables added. "They were underestimated in the World Cup and still are, yet they have added players since then and are outstanding individually."

A draw, Venables' fourth in five matches, would be a decent result. Even so, a win would not go amiss, if only to make up for having to watch England in grey. They debut their new away strip. Described as indigo blue, it looks more like battleship grey. One hopes there will be more colour in the performance.

Pros and cons: four in the frame to coach England



Ian Botham
Age: 40
Playing career: England, Somerset, Worcestershire, Queensland, Durham, 102 Tests (12 as captain); 5,200 runs at 33.54; 393 wickets at 28.40.
For: Powers of inspiration and motivation. Charisma.
Against: Two thirds of above are unproven - the England side he captained was not famous for team spirit. Inexperienced in management.



John Emburey
Age: 43
Current position: Northamptonshire player-coach.
Playing career: England, Middlesex, 64 Tests; 1,723 runs at 22.67; 147 wickets at 38.44.
For: Huge knowledge; forward thinking; respect from current players.
Against: Lack of meaningful management or coaching experience - just one England A tour.

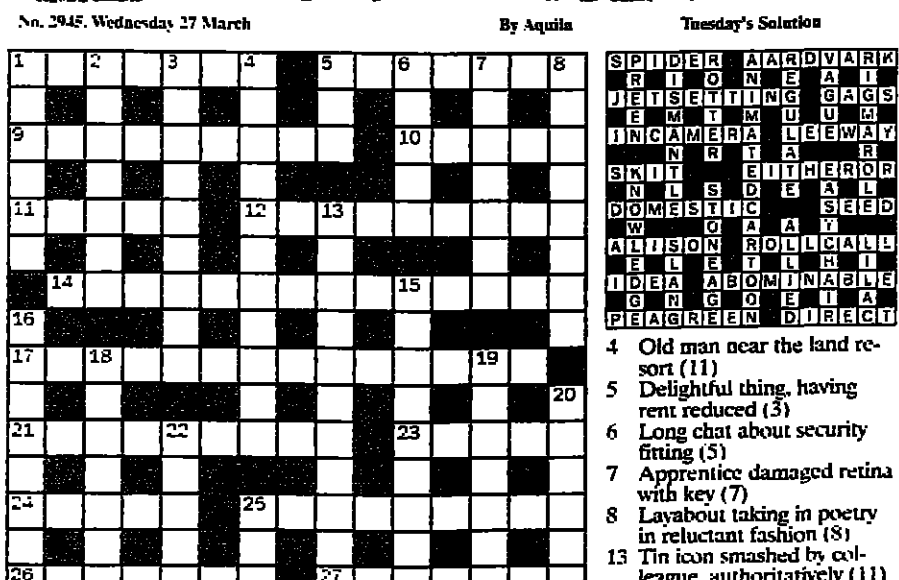


David Lloyd
Age: 49
Current position: Lancashire coach, England U-19 coach.
Playing career: England, Lancashire, Nine Tests; 552 runs at 42.46.
For: Enthusiasm, motivation. Against: Will what works with the Under-19s translate into the full international arena? Why do his Lancashire side full management or coaching experience - just one England A tour.



Phil Neale
Age: 41
Current position: Warwickshire director of coaching.
Playing career: Worcestershire, no Tests.
For: Excellent management skills and track record, both as captain and manager-coach; knowledge; forward thinking.
Against: Lack of international experience.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD in association with



- ACROSS**
- Meat cooked in ovens (7)
 - Cotton fabric beloved of Pygmalion (7)
 - Rascals and wits going to opera-house (9)
 - One leaving word of traffic? (5)
 - Publicity given to cricket-side, broadcasting (2,3)
 - Seamen to trim palms (9)
 - Light a firework (9,5)
 - End tennis-match in disarray and disappointment (14)
 - Topper given unlimited choice in local, it turns out (9)
- DOWN**
- Ghost of an idea (6)
 - A river once more backs up and falls (7)
 - Hunting mainly around university for marine animal (3-6)
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When you have the answers to the first three clues across AND the first three clues down, phone 0891 311 017 and leave your answers with your name and address and daytime telephone number by midnight tonight. Each day there is a case of Charles Wells Bombardier Premium Bitter to win. PLUS from all entries for the week a winner will be selected for a Weekend for two in a Charles Wells Country Hotel. Calls cost 39p per minute plus 40p per minute all other times. Winners will be selected at random from all correct entries received. No cash alternative. Normal Newspaper Publishing rates apply. Editor's decision is final. Winner's names can be obtained by sending an SAE to - Charles Wells Crossword, Unit A, Bove House, St Peter's Road, Maidenhead SL6 7DU.

Kinkladze rumours anger Lee

Francis Lee, the Manchester City chairman, yesterday forcibly denied that Georgi Kinkladze is bound for Barcelona or Internazionale. "It's total rubbish," he said, "and the reports that we have given Georgi a massive wage rise to keep him happy is again utter rubbish."

Lee insists that the brilliant Georgian midfielder has just signed a three-year contract. "It looks to me as though certain people think it's a good idea to try and create unrest in our dressing-room," he said. "We are contending with idiots writing rubbish."

Another overseas midfielder staying put at another struggling

Premiership club is the Serb Sasa Curcic, who has pledged his future to Bolton.

"They gave me the opportunity to play here and I am determined to repay that both to the club and to the supporters," said Curcic, who cost Bolton a club record £1.5m from Partizan Belgrade.

Brian Laws, the Grimsby manager, is to seek a personal hearing after being charged with misconduct by the Football Association over the Ivano Bonetti affair.

"It is about time the truth was told," said Laws, who was charged after a lengthy FA investigation into events in his team's dressing-room: when

Bonetti ended up with a fractured jaw. Laws maintains Bonetti came off worse when he flung a plate of sandwiches in anger, while others have claimed a blow was struck.

Everton's transfer-listed defender Matt Jackson has joined Charlton on a month's loan. Surgery on a groin strain will deny Sunderland the services of striker Phil Gray for the rest of the season.

Feyenoord have been fined a total of £38,000 and threatened with suspension from European competition because of their fans' violent behaviour during the Cup-Winners' Cup quarter-final against Borussia Mönchengladbach.

ARL blames Lindsay for rift

Rugby League

DAVE HADFIELD

The Australian Rugby League chairman, Ken Arthurson, has expressed the hope that the rift with Britain can be healed, but also launched a fierce attack on the role of Maurice Lindsay in the row over Super League.

Arthurson, backing in the ARL's victory over Super League in Australia, said: "We are looking to build for the future, but there is a rift between Australia and England that needs to be healed."

"It saddens me that nobody has done more to widen that rift than Maurice Lindsay. His reputation in this country has been

shattered by his muddled attempt to create a rebel competition against the ARL."

Despite that, says Arthurson, the game in the two countries can prove itself bigger than any individual disagreement - a hint that it may be possible to revive international competition between the two countries.

Lindsay, the European Super League's chief executive who returned from Australia yesterday after his failed attempt, was not available for comment.

Halifax have unveiled plans for a £5m redevelopment of their antiquated Thrum Hall ground. The work, which will begin in October with the building of a new 4,200-seater stand, will take two years and will be

partly paid for, the club hopes, by Lottery funding.

Halifax will be known as the Bluesox from this season, their previous nickname - the Bombers - having signally failed to catch on. "Whatever nickname we came up with offended somebody, so we went for a nickname that offended everybody equally," Nigel Wood, Halifax's chief executive, said.

St Helens will have Joey Hayes back on the wing in place of injured Alan Hunte for their opening Super League game at Workington on Sunday. Their side is otherwise unchanged from the one that beat Widnes in the Silk Cut Challenge Cup semi-final.

Broncos seek response, page 27



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